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BANK FOR WORLD TRADE

THE future of money, of banking and exchange is not at all irrelevant to the successful offensive which the British have launched in North Africa or to the gigantic struggle in the devastated towns and countryside of the U.S.S.R. Man's failure to construct a sane system to regulate exchange between the nations is one of the reasons for the ghastly state of the world to-day. Therefore, the schemes for the post-war regulation of monies and trade, published by the American and British Governments this week, are the concern not only of experts, but of every man, woman and child. The general standard of life which the world enjoys, and on which all hopes of social betterment hang, must depend in considerable part on the way in which the nations succeed in organising for their mutual benefit exchanges of goods surplus to their domestic needs. Any currency mechanism which is devised for financing future international trade must make provision against repetition of the maladjustments—the absurd accumulation in creditor countries of "frozen" gold, the deflationary and other restrictive policies enforced on "gold-less" countries, the exchange speculation, and flights of money—which were a major factor in the economic anarchy out of which arose Fascism, with its denunciations of "Jewish finance capitalism," and the aggressive political nationalism which led to the Second World War.

The proposals for an International Clearing Union which have been put forward by the Treasury for discussion by the United Nations, are conceived and presented with the lucidity and imagination that are peculiarly associated with the economic work of Lord Keynes. No jargon; plain statement; a document on a highly technical subject which is intelligible to the non-expert. The suggestions are based on the assumption, which underlines all possible schemes for the "winning of the peace" by international agreement and good-neighbourliness, that the nations must be willing to relinquish, in some part, their sovereign rights in the economic sphere, though the smaller the infringement of sovereignties involved the greater the likelihood of any scheme for regulating exchanges receiving general acceptance.

Reduced to its simplest terms, the Keynes Plan (as it is already called) proposes that the same principles of banking as now apply within each civilised country to exchanges of goods and services between individuals or firms should apply to exchanges in the international field. The suggested International Clearing Union is in fact to be a world bank. Each member State—the United Nations to begin with; all other States in due course—would be given in the ledgers of the bank an initial credit whose extent would be governed by the size of the State's pre-war foreign trade. The credit would be in terms of an international currency for which the rather unattractive title of "Bancor" is suggested. In order to obtain this international currency for the purpose of paying for imports the member State would draw against its balance, while the proceeds of its exports would be placed in the Union to the credit of its account.

What would happen if a nation either imported more than it exported, or refrained from utilising the proceeds of its imports to buy other countries' products? In the first case the credit balance of the "over-buying" country (like the bank balance of any improvident client of a joint-stock bank) would begin to run down. The Governing Board of the Union would then have the power (backed with the ultimate threat of expulsion) to require the over-drawing member to take steps—either by agreeing to a stated reduction in the external value of its currency, or by tightening its domestic exchange control, or by adjusting its level of prices and wages, if it so preferred — to restore the equilibrium of its balance. Less forcibly, in the case of a member State whose credit balance began to pile up, the Governing Board would be entitled to urge on it the necessity of reducing the excessive credit by buying or lending more abroad. The "excessive" creditor would apparently be free to reject the advice of the Governing Board, but the acceptance of the plan as a whole would clearly involve assent by the adhering States to the principle, whose presentation is one of the plan's most valuable features, that creditors internationally have obligations no less than debtors.

Into the technical and administrative details of the Clearing Union scheme, and the important question how far the proposals can be married to those outlined this week by the U.S. Treasury for a United Nations Stabilisation Fund to regulate foreign exchange, we shall go more fully in a later issue. At first sight the salient difference between the views of the two Treasuries appears to be that the American scheme postulates gold as the ultimate basis for the regulation of the volume of international trade, whereas under the Keynes Plan, though the international currency unit would be defined in terms of a weight of gold (as would also the agreed parities of exchange of national currencies), the Union would have the power *and the duty* to vary the value of Bancor in terms of gold in order to stabilise the world price level and so prevent inflationary-deflationary booms and slumps. That the world bank should be invested with such power would appear to be an essential element in world planning, though it is clear that the Governing Board—on which all States, rich and poor, would be duly represented—would have to enjoy a great measure of confidence from the peoples of the world. Even if this condition were fulfilled, their operations would clearly be wrecked if nations whose foreign trade was large, determined for internal political reasons to maintain commercial or tariff policies incompatible with the interests of others.

As things are, Lord Keynes may have been wise to go no farther than he has done in attempting to limit economic national sovereignties. What he has offered to the world for its consideration is not a plan for dealing with the immediate post-war chaos (for which in many countries special relief measures will clearly be needed) or for coping with the control of long term development loans from rich and advanced to poor and backward countries, but a mechanism whereby a beginning at least is made on the future economic ordering of the world between nations in the field of international trade. Some such scheme is essential if the anarchy of tariffs, devaluations and unemployment crises is not to return, with another war as its inevitable sequel.

Mr. Morrison Leads

Mr. Herbert Morrison has made yet another of the speeches which have been marking him out as the Labour leader with something interesting to say outside the range of his immediate war job. This latest speech is full of slogans which might, if Mr. Morrison could get his way, serve as the slogans of a revived Labour Party preaching a gospel of what has been called in the past "Practicable Socialism"—that is, a blend of Socialism, controlled private enterprise, and practical planning of production and employment. "Public ownership where it is appropriate, stimulating public control elsewhere"; "There is no case whatever for private unenterprise"; "Neither the slogan of all-round nationalisation nor of all-round decontrol is the slightest use to the country"—these are some of Mr. Morrison's phrases. Calling for the outright socialisation of the "natural" monopolies, among which he includes coal and transport as well as gas, water, and electricity, he goes on to urge that other monopolies at present dominated by cartels and trade associations shall be brought under "industrial controls" representing four things—expert knowledge of the industry, labour, the consumers, and the State. (National ownership of monopolies was good Liberal doctrine a generation ago.) The State's representatives, he urges, "should be consumer-minded rather than producer-minded, in order to ensure efficient, public-spirited conduct." Under "private unenterprise," he says, a substantial fraction of British industry between the two wars was "comfortably dying on its feet," and he believes this can be put right by "a practical mixture of genuine Socialism and genuinely free enterprise, the whole resting upon and in turn supporting national policies of social and industrial welfare." We have discussed so recently the workability of this particular half-way house that we need not comment any further now. We need only note that Mr. Morrison, unlike many of his colleagues, has evidently no intention of "comfortably dying on his feet."

The Price of Industrial Peace

The scheme for the future regulation of wages and conditions in the mining industry forwarded last week by Lord Greene's Board of Investigation to the Minister of Fuel and Power embodies a comprehensive system of arbitration on national issues, with both parties pledged in advance to accept the decision of the arbitration tribunal. This is at first sight startling in an industry which has been so often rent by trade disputes. But the truth is that ever since the Coal Mines Act of 1930 came into force, with its compulsory cartellisation of the mines and its complete provisions for the regulation of minimum prices and output, the industrial relations between miners and owners have been subtly changing. Coal prices were maintained at a high level during the depression of the Thirties, and have been kept consistently high ever since, and the wage system in the industry is now in effect one of sharing out the proceeds of monopoly price-fixing between owners and miners. This is not to say that the miners are well paid: they are not. But in most districts they are paid distinctly better than they think they would be if monopolistic control were done away with, and this fact forces them to some extent into an uneasy partnership with the owners. It is almost forgotten that when the MacDonald Government passed the Act of 1930 its provisions for price-maintenance were defended as a purely temporary expedient pending the setting of the industry's affairs in order. Price-maintenance has now become a recognised thing, and arbitration about the sharing of the proceeds appears almost as a natural sequel. The miners, no doubt, still want the mines to be taken over by the State, but they seem a good deal less intent on this than they were before they became in effect junior partners in a legally sanctioned monopoly. We put the position in this way not in blame of the miners, who had for long so raw a deal that they can hardly be blamed for protecting their wages as best they can. There are, however, manifest dangers in a system which makes employers and workers virtually co-monopolists and secures improved industrial relations at the expense of further entrenching the monopoly.

The Cotton Trade Looks Forward

A few weeks ago the Central Council for Works and Buildings put forward its plans for augmenting the labour supply of the building industry in order to meet the expected post-war demand, and the Government commented on the Council's Report in a very unsatisfactory White Paper. Now it is the turn of the cotton industry to come forward with emergency proposals for ensuring a sufficient supply of labour after the war. At first sight, it is very surprising that the cotton industry, which has been suffering from depression and redundancy for the past twenty years and more, should have any such problem to face; for nothing has happened to remove the pre-war tendency for the world's cotton industry to leave Lancashire and establish itself in areas where cheap labour can be found to work automatic, or nearly automatic, machines. But, in fact, the depression in Lancashire has lasted so long as to leave the industry with an ageing labour force already inadequate to man the machines which have survived the scaling down of the inter-war period. After the war there is likely to be, for a time, a demand for as many cotton goods as all Lancashire machines can supply. But demand at this level seems most unlikely to last, in face of the competition of substitutes as well as of expanding cotton industries elsewhere. In these circumstances, entry to the cotton trades will remain uninviting to those who are scared of finding themselves after the war in a blind-alley occupation. Here is one of those cases in which it is clearly desirable to offer the fullest possible guarantees, not merely of decent maintenance if work gives out, but also of really thorough re-training for an alternative occupation.

The State and the Doctors

Is the Government telling the medical profession what it demands of them, or is it only asking what the profession is prepared to agree to without any fuss? The correspondence between the Ministry of Health and the B.M.A., published recently in the *British Medical Journal*, appears to indicate that the Government is handling the doctors in a curiously gingerly fashion. It is not asking the B.M.A. to say anything that will commit the medical profession, and it does not propose, in talking things over with the B.M.A., to say anything to which it will itself stand committed. There is to be a sort of preliminary sparring match before either side gets down sincerely to the job. It looks rather as if the Government is asking the B.M.A. to tell it what the doctors are likely to accept before making any decision about its own policy, and as if the doctors are to be left with a second line to fall back upon if the B.M.A. seems to them to be going too far. We agree, of course, that the doctors ought to be consulted—and so ought the dentists, the nurses, the hospital almoner, and all the other groups of professionals concerned. We agree that it is of great importance to secure the goodwill of the professionals in introducing the comprehensive medical service proposed in the Beveridge Report. But surely it is for the Government to formulate the main points of the scheme—and to do so in such a way that the general public, as well as the doctors, can criticise and influence the proposals before they take final shape. Otherwise, we fear that what will emerge will not be a comprehensive medical service for the people.

Cry Havoc, and Let Slip the Days of Peace

The battle over the taking over of the ownership of Short Brothers, and in a different way of General Aircraft, seems to be developing from a skirmish into a major operation. General Aircraft is being represented in some quarters as thoroughly deserving what it has got, and in other quarters as an innocent victim of the aircraft ring, and in the case of Short's it is being alleged that the action of the Minister has been high-handed and quite unnecessarily drastic. At the same time, there is a minor commotion over the purchase by the Ministry of Supply of the major part of the plant of the Barrow Hematite Co., except its mines and blast furnaces, which are left in the shareholders' hands. Sir Stafford Cripps has replied to critics of his acquisition of Short's share capital without any assurance of its return to the previous owners after the war that this is how the Defence regulation allows him to act, and is the only way in which it allows him to act. But in all cases the public is left without information about the reasons for what has been done. Security grounds are, of course, given for withholding this information, but it is difficult to see in what respect its disclosure, at any rate in fairly general terms, could possibly help the enemy. As for the major point at issue over Short's, the real controversy has much less to do with the rights of the shareholders than with the fear in capitalist quarters that the Government may mean to remain in the aircraft business after the war. Shareholders whose property is taken over for financial reasons by the Government do not get any assurance that it will be returned to them after the war, and Short's shareholders as such have no special grievance if they are being paid a fair price. The "private enterprise" school, on the other hand, is determined to fight anything that may lead to State trading after the war, from taking over an aircraft factory to keeping on a British Restaurant or putting an Ordnance Factory to use in making something for civilian consumption after the war.

The House at Work (*by a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

Wednesday's business was pleasantly interrupted by the Premier's cheerful picture of the British Eighth Army breaking through the Gabes gap.

The next item was a welcome proof that when Parliament feels strongly about something it can be effective. Mrs. Tate has fought for many months to get equal compensation for both sexes for war injuries. Substantial victory could not have been won unless a large part of the House had been prepared to go into the division lobby against the Government. Womersley was careful to point out that this concession must not be taken as a precedent for peacetime wage rates. The triumphant smiles of the women M.P.s, however, showed that they were certain that a big advance had been made towards the goal of equal pay for equal work.

Labour ministers have been much perturbed at the rumours that they were going to leave the Party. Following Morrison's week-end speech came Attlee's statement to the Parliamentary Party, both reasserting the loyalty of Labour ministers to their Party. The "reunion" was welcomed, but there was a feeling that Attlee should have included a specific repudiation of a coupon election in his statement instead of saying that the Party was free to decide for itself what it would do when an election came. The last has not been heard of this question.

Big Business is up in arms at the taking over of specific firms to speed the war effort. Major Lloyd George had to face a barrage of questions about the Point of Ayr Colliery. He admitted that it was technically well managed, but claimed that his action had been necessary owing to the firm's provocative action towards the "free trade union" which many of its employees wanted to join; he firmly maintained that production would have suffered right through the North Wales coalfield if he had ignored the trouble. Cripps was then attacked for his action over Short Bros. The Prayer was withdrawn, but only after Lyttelton had made a surely unneccessary number of concessions to Tory critics.

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THE MASSACRE GOES ON

As one of the results of Mr. Eden's visit to Washington a conference is to meet in Bermuda to work out a common policy for the benefit of refugees, above all for the Jews. This conference will only mean anything if the governments concerned change their individual attitudes to the problem. It was in July, 1942, that Himmler began to organise the extermination of Jews throughout Europe. Early in December the Polish Government published its ghastly narrative of the massacres in Warsaw and elsewhere, and on December 17th the Commons, after listening to the corroboration which Mr. Eden gave them, rose in their places to express their sympathy and indignation. Nearly four months have passed since that unusual demonstration, and still no practical step has been taken to facilitate the escape of the surviving members of this martyred people. This is not because barbarities have ceased. Throughout these months the Nazis have been completing the "cleansing" of Germany and Bohemia: in the latter country, as the B.B.C. has told us, the still surviving Jews have been deprived of their ration cards and forbidden to buy unrationed food. Of those who are deported in cattle trucks to Eastern Poland or occupied Russia, many perish of cold, hunger, or typhus, and many are shot because they are too weak to work. Most of these victims are beyond the reach of succour, but there are exceptions. Where so little can be done, we should have supposed that the British and American Governments would have snatched eagerly at the few opportunities that do present themselves. But the Foreign Office has insisted that in this matter the United Nations must act together, and America has hitherto been unco-operative.

It is not clear why we must wait for American co-operation, desirable though it is. As far back as February 3rd Colonel Stanley confirmed the news that the Bulgarian Government was willing to release 4,000 Jewish children with 500 adults, and another 500 children from Rumania and Hungary were in the same case. These we were prepared to receive in Palestine. That represented no new concession, no special mercy granted to lessen the horrors of this massacre. Before the outbreak of the war a total had been fixed for immigration with the Jewish National Home, which left the Jews still with a right to 29,000 permits. But as yet nothing has been done for these children, whose danger increases daily, for the Nazis have now begun to drive the Jews from the Balkan Peninsula into the slaughterhouse of Poland. To open the doors of Palestine wide is the best thing and the easiest thing to do.

There are, however, several other steps which should be considered at Bermuda. The most obvious of them is to nominate a Commissioner on behalf of all the Allies, who will do for all the refugees, whether racial or political, what Nansen did twenty years ago. The Foreign Office and the Home Office have enough on their hands: this man, who must possess shrewdness and energy as well as humanity, should be empowered to act promptly for us all. The simplest step is one that should have been taken long ago. Our own doors are still virtually closed. Jews do manage to escape, though only in trifling numbers; visas are only granted to the very few who can be of direct use to us in the prosecution of the war. The least that should be done is to supply our consuls with blocks of visas which they should be authorised to distribute on the ground of need and compassion alone. The problem is not yet to settle these fugitives permanently, but only to provide an asylum where they can be safe until the Continent is liberated. Those of them who come from Western Europe will be happy to return to their homes. Unworthy excuses are used to justify inaction. It may be that among the adults, but not among the children, there may be a few spies or *saboteurs*. Then let doubtful cases be watched for a time in the relative comfort of a well-administered internment camp. There is room for more in the Isle of Man, and there would be no difficulty in finding other suitable refuges within Allied territory.

There remain for consideration some suggestions for long-range action. Two at least of the neutrals, Switzerland and Sweden, have been generous in opening their doors. They would do even more if they were relieved from the anxiety that they may have to care for a big refugee population after the war is over. If they were assured that somewhere, be it in Palestine, North Africa, the Dominions or South America, we and the Americans will settle those who have no home to return to, they would willingly open their gates even wider. That is the sort of assurance we expect from Bermuda. In the meantime it lies with us and with us alone to open our own ports and those of Palestine.

SOME AGREEMENTS ON EDUCATION

I HAVE a series of folders in which I keep memoranda and pamphlets dealing with various aspects of Post-war Reconstruction. Last week the education folder burst its bounds, became Education I and overflowed into Education II. This is the first folder to have behaved in this way. Observing its swelling contents I feel regret—it is difficult to get new folders these days—but not surprise. For, at the moment of overflow, it was bulging with ten pamphlets, sixteen memoranda and nineteen articles, all of which have appeared during the last eighteen months, devoted to the remodelling of our educational system after the war. The Labour Party, the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the Trades Union Congress, the Co-operative Union, the Workers' Educational Association, the Incorporated Association of Headmasters, the Spirit of Britain Movement, are only a few of the bodies who have produced these pamphlets. On one set of proposals, that of the Report of the Conservative Sub-committee, I have already commented in this journal. What I have now to note is the surprising unanimity of the background against which they stand out. For the most remarkable thing about these sets of proposals is the amount of ground which is apparently common to their sponsors. I do not know a better summary of the principle which underlies existing agreements than the following quotation from the Prime Minister's recent broadcast:

> It is in our power, however, to secure equal opportunities for all. The facilities for advanced education must be evened out and multiplied. No one who can take advantage of a higher education should be denied his chance. You cannot conduct a modern community except with an adequate supply of persons upon whose education, whether humanitarian, technical or scientific, much time and money have been spent.

The Prime Minister continued:

> We must make plans for part-time release from industry so that our young people may have the chance to carry on their general education and also to obtain a specialised education which will fit them better for their work.

"Equal opportunities for all" is the key phrase. But to what ends are the equal opportunities to be devoted? What, in other words, is the purpose of educating people? Broadly the answer is that there are three purposes. First, vocational; so to equip a boy* that when he leaves school and enters the world he may be in a position to earn his living as the possessor of some special skill, knowledge or training. This objective governs the education of a solicitor no more and no less than the training of a tailor, or an agricultural labourer; indeed, the latter is to-day following one of the most technically varied callings in the whole range of industry.

Secondly, social; to enable a boy to play his part in the community as a critical, independent-minded citizen of a democracy. This entails some knowledge of history, especially recent history, some economics and political science, a knowledge of the national and local governmental systems of his country, a sufficient acquaintance with geography to provide him with a map of the modern world and some instruction in international affairs.

Thirdly, personal; to enable him to develop all that he has it in him to be, as a gardener seeks to enable each tree or plant to put forth the essential quality of its own that differentiates it from all other trees or plants, and makes it a thing of usefulness or beauty. This entails some familiarity with literature and art, some acquaintance with the history of our species, some knowledge of what great men have thought and said memorably about life. In other words, some literature, history, science, and a little philosophy.

Granted these to be the ideal ends of education, granted an agreement to give every boy and girl an equal chance of realising them, so far as he has it in him to do so, how is the agreement to be given concrete form? The answer to this question depends, it is obvious, upon the shape of our social system. One of the difficulties that besets educational reform is that you cannot solve educational problems without at the same time solving a number of others, e.g. bad housing, malnutrition and poverty. As the Report laid before the L.C.C. Educational Committee two weeks ago points out, the Council finds to-day, as it found forty years ago, that the main obstacles to the education of children are "ignorance, poverty, overcrowding, ill-health, poor homes and unsatisfactory social conditions."

Still, one must start somewhere; here, then, are some of the demands of the Council for Educational Advance representative of the Trades Union Congress, the Co-operative Union, the N.U.T. and the W.E.A., a semi-permanent body sitting under the presidency of Professor Tawney, which represent the highest common factor of the general agreement. The Council is thinking of the promised Education Bill which Mr. Butler is shortly to introduce into the Commons. The Bill should, it holds, include the raising of the school leaving age to 15 at the end of the war, and to 16 not more than three years later; free education under a single secondary code for all children after the primary stage; common standards of staffing, equipment and amenities in all schools; maintenance allowances for children in all post-primary schools; day continued education up to the age of 18; free access to universities and higher technical colleges for all who can benefit thereby.

Let us look at some of these points in greater detail. First, we are all to go to the same primary schools until we are 11. Secondly, we are all to go to the same secondary schools from 11 to 15 or to 16. These will provide a common minimum cultural and vocational education for every child on a footing of equality. Given that they are of adequate size and properly staffed, they will in addition to the common minimum be able to provide a variety of courses designed to meet the different needs and interests of different children. A single State system does not, therefore, entail uniformity. In rural areas these secondary schools should serve as cultural and community centres of the district following the lines of Henry Morris's village colleges. At 15 or 16 there should be a break which may be described as the break between those who can and those who cannot profit by further academic education. For the latter there are two schemes, a less and a more ambitious. The less ambitious involves Day Continuation Schools up to the age of 18, the more ambitious attendance at a vocational college, for example, an engineering or mining college, where the special skill is acquired to enable the student to fulfil the first of the aims of education set out above.

For the former there is "public school" education up to the age of 18 and the university up to the age of 22. This brings up the vexed question of the public schools. There seems to be widespread agreement on six points:

> (i) That in so far as they embody elements of value these should be made available to all young people able to profit by them, irrespective of the size of the bank balances of the parents.
>
> (ii) That admission should, therefore, follow

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* Boy, for the purposes of this article, includes girl.

upon the result of an examination at 15 or 16 for which all children would have the right to sit.

(iii) That fees and maintenance should be paid by the State and that an allowance should be paid to the parents of poor pupils in respect of the maintenance of their sons and daughters during the holidays.

(iv) That education at the public schools should be in the humanities and—though I venture to use the word with the greatest circumspection—in the qualities of " leadership."

(v) That the objections to training for " leadership " arise primarily from the selection of our potential leaders from a special economic and social class, the effect being to crystallise this class into a permanent governing caste. This objection is largely overcome where each fresh generation of public school boys is drawn by competitive examination from the community as a whole. It is not, however, overcome by proposals now emanating from the public schools themselves which would seek to reserve a certain number of free places for the able children of working-class parents, thus skimming off the cream of working-class ability in the social stratum in which it turns up, elevating it into a higher stratum and so sterilising it for any constructive social purpose, but otherwise going on very much as before.

(vi) It follows from the above that all teachers in schools of whatever type should be paid by the State, and that all classes and courses should be supervised by the State, not in the sense that the State should determine what should be taught, but because the State, as the guardian of the taxpayers' money, must insist upon the maintenance of certain minimum standards of efficiency, and that, in this sense, the public schools should be incorporated into a State system.

I have left out of this survey a number of other items which fall within the area of postulated agreement, such as universities and the provision for adult education at one end of the scale and provision of nursery schools at the other. There are, however, three matters upon which a word must be added.

First, there is agreement that the training of teachers should follow uniform lines and be conducted only at recognised centres and colleges. The purpose of this agreement is to end the vicious self-perpetuating system, whereby the public school masters of one generation are drawn from the public school boys of the last, often with no intervening period in the world, and almost always with no contact with primary schools and their teachers, while primary and secondary school teachers having graduated from primary and secondary schools through teachers' training colleges go back to primary and secondary schools, again with no intervening period in the world, and with no contact with public schools and *their* masters. It would be difficult to conceive a system better calculated to promote and perpetuate the division of the nation into two classes climbing two educational ladders and trained for the membership of two social castes by teachers who themselves belong to the castes for which the pupils are trained. The proposal is also designed to end the existing anomaly under which any man can put up a plate announcing that he proposes to teach the young and, if parents are foolish enough or vain enough to send their children to him, can proceed to miseducate them in snobby little preparatory schools staffed by men who, having made a hash of their own academic careers, take it upon themselves to mishandle those of others with such regularity as to provoke Shaw's jibe, "He who can does; he who cannot teaches."

Secondly, it is agreed that all the types of education to which I have referred should not only be free but compulsory. Few seem any longer to have patience with the argument that this is the thin end of the totalitarian wedge, since it interferes with a man's right to invest money—and as much money as he pleases—in the education of his children, by choosing their schools. Over 90 per cent. of the people in this country have not the right, because they have not the means, and that the other 10 per cent. should be able to buy a superior brand of education for their children cuts at the root of the principle of equal opportunity, which recognises education not as an economic luxury but as a right.

Thirdly, it must be regretfully conceded that the agreement does not apply to religious teaching, and that the problem of dual control seems, at the moment, likely to bedevil education in the present and near future as disastrously as it has done in the past. Most of the reformers want to abolish non-provided schools altogether, but Mr. Churchill's broadcast did not sound like abolition to me.

C. E. M. Joad

OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

Dear Mr. President,

You know, Mr. President, far better than I can do that the prospect of victory for the United Nations evokes a lip-service to democracy from the Quislings of yesterday's Fifth Column, and from those not less dangerous because mostly unconscious Quislings of the Sixth Column who have no understanding that the end of freedom is inextricably interwoven with the methods of freedom. It is the operations of this Sixth Column in Washington and London by which we cannot avoid being alarmed. We are alarmed by the patronage extended by your State Department to men like Peyrouton, and by your War Department to men like Otto of Hapsburg. We are alarmed when your Ambassador to Madrid offers ardent support to the evil regime of General Franco. We are alarmed when the radio stations of America ask that nothing be said in criticism of the King of Italy, who made Mussolini possible, or of the Crown Prince, who has accepted him for twenty-three years, or of Badoglio and Grandi, who have been his collaborators, more or less ardent, ever since he first reached power. We are alarmed when, though Hungary continues to play the jackal to Hitler, his agency is permitted to go on working in America in the person of Tibor Eckhardt. We seem to see the outlines of a new " legitimacy " in Europe, its patronage American, its instruments the old regimes, its collaborators men who would have gladly worked for Hitler if it had served their turn. Mr. Hull may be angry when these curious relations are criticised by his Press Conference; he perhaps regards it as a challenge to his good faith. We are, on the contrary, certain that Mr. Hull has all the best possible intentions. But we sometimes suspect that the streamlined power-diplomacy of Mr. Berle and Mr. Dunn, the heroic embodiment by Mr. Robert Murphy of the sophisticated role of a Ruritanian diplomat, the shrewd hints (in the best Massachusetts tradition of John Adams) that Mr. Ray Atherton not seldom reveals of the need to make the new world one that is run by the old men for old purposes, are all of them indices to an attitude of mind which may easily result in old Metternich being the one man whose ideas have a permanent place at the peace conference. We refuse to believe that the pinchbeck Metternichs of Washington have the right to speak to Europe, still less to lay their plans for its reorganisation, in your name.

And what is true of the difficult implications of American diplomacy is significant in the context of the domestic pattern in Washington. We know, of course, that you have no responsibility for the renewal by Congress of its grant to the egregious Mr. Dies and his committee; and we were deeply relieved when, despite the sinister warnings of men like Speaker Rayburn, you sent the great Report on Social Security forward. We recognise gladly that bodies like the Bone and Truman Committees have done an admirable surgical job in exposing the folly or inefficiency of some of the " dollar-a-year " controls in Washington. It is disturbing to us when business men can make it politically desirable for Leon Henderson to be dropped, or when the War Production Board or the Reconstruction Finance Corporation act as though Big Business had taken over the New Deal; and, obviously, the muddles over oil and rubber, steel and aluminium, are not unconnected with the authority it achieves when it moves into office as an agency of a New Deal President. This Congress, it may well be, is going to be known as the " Victory " Congress. But, as we watch the increasing inaccessibility of executive agencies to democratic control, we are bound to wonder for whom and for what the victory is to be won. For we know that liberalism as political democracy was killed by 1939 because it would not confront the issues raised by the fact that, under monopoly capitalism, the business men take over the government of the country. A planned economy in the United States is not likely to have agents or policies sympathetic to democracy if the men who operate its principles are largely the same men who devoted their main efforts, as lawyers or managers, to the destruction of the New Deal. You, at least, Mr. President, will agree that the essence of the New Deal was not socialism, but the pragmatic attempt to meet a crisis in the historic institutions of America by their adaptation to new functions. But what is going to happen when the men who fought against you so ruthlessly until Pearl Harbour emerge as the instruments of democracy and freedom, under your leadership? Even while we are organising for the defeat of Hitlerism, we are giving men who have little hostility to its economic techniques, some of the levers of vital control. It is vital to destroy Hitlerism; but it is not less vital to prevent the war being the means whereby the National Association of Manufacturers becomes a pseudonym for the Federal Government of the United States. It matters enormously that we win; but how we win matters enormously, too. For that will settle what we win for; and that only will measure the degree in which our victory is real.

You may, of course, retort, Mr. President, that my fears of some of the implications of diplomatic and foreign policy in the United States have equal validity in the Government of Great Britain. I should not deny that this is the case; and the fact that men like the Labour leaders not only accept those implications, but even ask the Labour Party (I am glad to think in vain) to regard its demi-semi-quavers about the Beveridge Report as the mark of a great victory. We confront here the grave danger that we shall defeat a brutal totalitarianism only to find that we have established the foundations here of the more sophisticated version which will, no doubt, be the homage paid by Big Business to our democratic heritage. I do not know whether we shall act in time to overcome the danger. I do know that the problem here is complicated by the fact that the issues it creates do not greatly interest Mr. Churchill. His ardour for the battle excludes any close attention to the purpose for which the battle is being waged. Mr. Churchill could only see that purpose in its full perspective if a man who, like yourself, could speak to him on equal terms, insisted that he must give his attention to it. Without that insistence he may easily lead us to victory in the wrong war, and leave the next generation to pay the price of his oversight.

But if the President of the United States chooses to speak, the whole world, including the people of the United States, must listen; and in no country is there any man so powerful that he may neglect what the man in the White House is willing to attempt. Were you to say that a war for democracy and freedom must be directly concerned now with those problems of ownership and control in the economic sphere upon which a real and lasting victory depends, our propagandists in the United States would cease to promise their press conferences that there is no danger of Britain going Socialist after the war. You would reinforce the influence of that large body of opinion here which is ready for great experiment in the field of social and economic justice. Only freedom from want and fear deliberately organised now can make the foundations of democracy secure in the post-war world. You would, I am confident, give hope to all the brave men and women in the occupied countries who, in the hour of liberation, will turn to those leaders who can give a positive content to its opportunities. And, not least in importance, you can build that bridge to a full understanding with the Soviet Union upon which the very life of the next generation depends. I am confident that, if you chose to speak in these terms, you would not only speed the victory, but give it that character which we owe to the millions of brave men and women who have risked all they have and are to win it.

Do you remember, Mr. President, those brave words you used in your inaugural address of March 4th, 1933? "This is pre-eminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly . . . let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. . . . Plenty is at our door, but a generous use of it languishes in the very sight of the supply. Primarily, this is because the rulers of the exchange of mankind's goods have failed through their own stubbornness and their own incompetence, have admitted their failure, and abdicated. . . . They have no vision, and when there is no vision the people perish. The money changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilisation. We may now restore that temple to the ancient truths." Restorations of this character, Mr. President, must always be safeguarded against the danger of counter-revolution. That is what we are fighting in our battle with the Axis Powers. It is what we are fighting just as much among ourselves in the interests which seek to destroy, if indirectly, the "larger good" of which you spoke in 1933. Americans wanted then, you said, a leadership which would bind both life and property to the discipline that "larger good" requires. You assumed that leadership ten years ago, and within a few weeks had given the exhilaration of new hope to the American people. It is that same spirit I ask from you in the immense emergency we now confront. You "assumed unhesitatingly the leadership of this great army of our people, dedicated to a disciplined attack upon our common problems." I beg from you the renewal of that pledge. It is not only linked to that central principle which has made America a part of the hope of mankind. It expresses in the domestic field the aspirations of ordinary men and women everywhere. And the sooner it permeates the agencies and policies of the American Government, the more we are entitled to be confident that our victory in this war will not degenerate into a failure like that which followed the triumph of 1918. No living statesman can do so much as you to create that confidence. Once it has been built, we can go forward with high hearts to the building of a new world.

HAROLD J. LASKI

A LONDON DIARY

EVER since the British began to bomb the Continent, the R.A.F. have taken care in occupied countries, as far as possible, only to hit factories, docks and other military objectives. On the whole the evidence has been that in spite of some unavoidable civilian casualties, the people of Holland, Belgium and France have not resented, and indeed, in some cases, even welcomed these raids. Now for the first time, on any large scale, the German news service is telling uncontradicted stories of the useless destruction and ghastly casualties which have resulted from American daylight bombing of towns like Antwerp and Rouen where thousands of people who should be our friends and allies are said to have been killed. It should be remembered that daylight raids always kill a large number of people, whereas the casualties for night raiding has proved much smaller than anyone expected. Moreover, these daylight raids have to be carried out at great height; the bombs fall on markets and crowded streets out of the clear sky. These towns are not even in the battle area. I cannot believe that this is a sane policy. It is a strange story to have to tell after so much propaganda about the perfect precision of the American bomb sight.

No one will contradict Sir Stafford Cripps when he says that strikes are out of place in a war in which Labour has at least as much to lose as the propertied class. But his remark recalls a statement of an official who was in the Ministry of Labour in the last war. He said that strikes then mainly occurred because hours were so long and everyone so tired and fretful that trivial incidents started a flare-up. He added that when this did happen the Ministry of Labour was actually pleased, because the result of the enforced rest for the workers usually meant an increase in production afterwards. I am quite prepared to believe this. I am constantly meeting people who tell me with alarm how worn and nervous workers get from lack of holiday, both in the Civil Service and in the factories. More important, I have heard from one after another, particularly amongst women, how work is scamped and neglected simply because the hours are too long. Factory workers report that the afternoon is quite often spent in finding ways of evading work, not because people want to lose the war or because they are naturally lazy, but because no one can sustain enthusiasm during so many hours of work. I believe you could cut off an hour or more per day from the hours and add a week or two to the holidays of every worker in this country, and find that production figures would rise.

* * *

With palaver about "feathered locusts" the Ministry of Agriculture calls on us to destroy the house-sparrow, throw out its nest, and treat it as vermin. At the same time it warns us that the hedge-sparrows' lovely blue eggs should be left alone, since the hedge-sparrow, like the chaffinch and other small birds, is useful to agriculture. How, in heaven's name, does the Ministry expect the children and labourers, who are set on to this destructive job, to distinguish between the different small birds that are caught in traps and only to destroy the nests of house-sparrows? I know of one ingenious fruit farmer who is also a naturalist; he has devised a way of decoying bullfinches into a large cage where he keeps them alive, releasing them when the danger to the fruit crops is over. But then he is an exceptional cultivator and bullfinches are exceptional birds. The tendency of the peasant is to dislike almost all birds except the robin and the wren, but this is the result of crass ignorance, as those who kill off birds in large numbers will find when their crops are eaten with insects. The Ministry is almost certainly doing more harm than good by such exhortations. Now that the initial harm is done the B.B.C. had better come to the rescue. There should be popular talks on wild birds, explaining their value to farmers.

* * *

One of the strongest criticisms I've heard of the very Conservative view about the Colonies recently expressed by Mr. Churchill came from a young man bearing a name very well known in the Conservative Party. He is himself a Tory candidate for Parliament, and he has just returned from a long period of highly variegated service in the Middle East. He disagreed with Mr. Churchill about "condominium" as a method of colonial government. He had just returned from what we too often forget is the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and argued to me that this was an example of a highly successful condominium. He went on to base on his Sudanese experiences a novel proposal for the future of Tripoli. He thought it should be an Anglo-Italian condominium. This, he said, would have two great advantages. First, it would be an effective means of linking together the British and Italian peoples when the Fascist regime is disposed of. Second, it would provide just that most sensible division of responsibilities. The Italians, however black their Government's record in respect of their treatment of the Senussi, are first-class engineers and first-class settlers. The condominium would leave to the Italians the job of settling and developing the country, and to the British the responsibility for external defence, internal law and order, and relations with the native races.

The quiet tenor of the education controversy to-day suggests that nonconformity is not what it was. One of my earliest memories as a very small boy is the arrival of men to distrain on my father's goods because he refused to pay his rates towards the upkeep of Church Schools. Each year a few articles of silver plate were taken and sold at a public auction. Some anonymous friend bought them and brought them back to us. So my father's rates were paid, as it were, by proxy. Perhaps because he had a sense of humour and was no fanatic, he dropped this practice after a few years. Dr. Clifford, the most famous of the passive resistors, continued, I believe, to refuse to pay his education rate until he died. And now just forty years after we are back at this old controversy. The Church maintains its attitude; the Church Schools did not die, or at least died in much smaller numbers than Sidney Webb expected when he drafted the Balfour Education Bill of 1902; deputations visit the Minister and the old discussions arise, but no one, certainly not I, feels about the matter with the kind of zeal which would make us refuse to pay our rates.

* * *

Complaints about red tape and duplication of forms, etc., are more vehement in the U.S.A. than they ever were in England. There is a story going around that the Japanese Secret Service have reported to their superiors in Tokio that it would be useless to bomb Washington because Roosevelt is so clever that every part of the Government has been triplicated.

CRITIC

THE PLAN TO END THE PLAN

(After G. K. Chesterton.)

The Five Year Plan of the Soviet State was a
sharing plan, an unsparing plan,
A ruthlessly overbearing plan to persons with
land and gold,
Which propagated a point of view essentially
proletarian
With agriculture and industry exclusively state-
controlled.
But we will fashion a Tory plan,
And a Liberal plan and a Labour plan,
A master plan for the Empire State
Of no class or party type,
A plan for trade and a plan for aid
But not a beggar-my-neighbour plan
Which anti-planners can formulate
As soon as the time is ripe.

Roosevelt's New Deal was a Four Year Plan, a
productive plan, an instructive plan,
A lifeline thrown to the little man when the bosses
had come to grief,
But the N.R.A. of Washington could hardly be
called a seductive plan
To Democrats or Republicans who were not on
State relief.
But we will frame a protection plan,
An export trade resurrection plan,
A plan for private enterprise
And a plan for public health,
A spacious plan, a capacious plan,
A bumper General Election plan,
A plan of fruitful compromise
And a plan for vested wealth.

The Four Year Plan of the German Reich was a
furious plan, a penurious plan,
Which regimented the common man while the
living standard fell,
A vicious plan, a pernicious plan, a very highly
injurious plan,
And a plan that failed to find the means for butter
and guns as well.
But we will make a defensive plan,
A wider and more comprehensive plan,
A plan to leave things as they are
If planners would interfere;
With each advance backed by sound finance
It will not be a too-expensive plan,
And a plan that does not go too far
Is a plea for sober cheer.

The Uthwatt, Scott and Beveridge plans are romantic plans and pedantic plans
They are plans to fight against owners' rights in property and land,
But these can all be safely merged in wider and more gigantic plans
Where half is planned for the general good and half may remain unplanned.
We will not have an autarchic plan,
An ideologic, anarchic plan,
Plans taking a class or a party line
Will find few partisans,
Our domestic plan, a majestic plan
Will be simply and solely Churchillian—
A plan where all of the plans combine
Is a Plan to End the Plans.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to D. Pigott.

Paste entires on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

When a vote was taken at a meeting of London spinsters yesterday on a resolution demanding pensions at 55, a few hands were raised against it. The chairwoman rose and said she would take the vote again and this time no one must vote against it. The resolution was unanimous. — *Sunday Pictorial.*

EX-MANNIN Fan wishes to sell a very fine portrait (22 x 25) of Ethel. Very suitable for modern room.—Ad. in *Peace News.*

Hastings has introduced a cuckoo-like sound in place of the air-raid siren.—*Sunday Express.*

The Admiral hasn't had news of his wife and five children since he was compelled to leave them behind in Bandoeng. He does not even know the fate of his pet monkey that used to shin up and down the trees in the grounds of his spacious Batavia residence.—*News Review.*

Lord Faringdon, speaking in Indian debate in Lords to-day addressed the House as " My dears." When laughter had subsided he corrected himself to " My Lords."—*Evening Standard,* Tuesday, April 6.

THREE MERRY BAKERS

[In an article we published last week our correspondent discussed, on a basis of careful inquiry, working conditions and wages commonly found in the catering industry. This week he describes, by way of contrast, a happy personal experience in the kitchen of one of London's great hotels.]

IN the first Parliamentary debate on the Catering Wages Bill, Mr. Bevin presented an impregnable case on behalf of 500,000 virtually unorganised and collectively inarticulate workpeople. This massive achievement owed nothing to subsequent supporters of the Bill, who made no serious attempt to discuss the actual opinion and conditions of the unprotected workers concerned, but instead succeeded perhaps better than their opponents in obscuring real issues. Take the dialogue recorded in Hansard, February 9th, 1943:

Mr. Banfield : Is it not true that if a man employed by the biggest catering firm in London wrote a letter publicly supporting this scheme that he would get the sack ?

Major Gluckstein : I think the answer to that is " Nonsense."

Mr. Banfield : It is not nonsense. He would be turned out on the streets to starve.

To deny the need for the Catering Wages Bill is to deny the principle of social security. But justice is not made plain by injustice, nor by unfounded accusations. There are two sides to the picture. Let me acquaint Mr. Banfield with some first-hand facts about that section of the industry which is his primary concern.

Not long ago I had to choose between obtaining temporary night employment immediately, or abandoning the final stages of four years' whole-time research. In such a case there can be only one decision. But temporary night work is not easy to get these days. After several unsuccessful attempts, I was advised to try the hotel trade, which is understaffed on account of its war-time classification as a " non-essential " industry.

The prospect had no appeal for me. My acquaintance with the inner working of the hotel and restaurant business is not altogether superficial. Some years ago I was for a time actively concerned in the management of two English hotels. Before the war, thanks to a Swiss friend whose reputation as an hotelier is world-wide, I was privileged to study methods and conditions in a number of famous Continental catering establishments. Experience had taught me to regard the lower grades of employment behind a restaurant's service doors as one of the very last resorts of necessitous humanity. I had an uneasy suspicion that temporary work could only be found among such grades.

However, my purpose was to get a job, free from the exactions of serious responsibility, which would leave me some liberty by day to conclude a private undertaking for which much had already been sacrificed. There was no time to pick and choose. If the experience proved disagreeable, its duration would at least be limited. And Mr. Bevin's august concern for the same industry lent spice to the adventure. . . . I telephoned the manager of one of London's great hotels, and asked if he had any vacancies for night staff. He invited me to call and see him.

Half an hour later I sat in his private office, in an atmosphere of courtesy which almost made me forget that I was not a distinguished client. Having heard my reasons for applying to him for work, he told me he had made inquiries in the interval and regretted that the only vacancy available was one as kitchen porter . . . a post which he did not recommend. I managed to convince him that I really wanted the job and would do my best to give satisfaction. And so, after further interviews with the staff manager and chef, I was engaged.

Is there any office less redolent of prestige than that of kitchen porter in a great hotel ? By comparison, the occupation of public lavatory attendant is indeed a dignified profession. Lady Astor and others have recently spoken, perhaps indiscreetly, but at least with a real measure of truth, of " sweating " in the catering trade. Well . . . kitchen porters are the dog's-bodies of that industry. However, I was soon to make some astonishing discoveries.

To begin with, I found that my gross wages were £4 13s. 4d. a week for six nights' work varying between eight and nine hours. Also, three meals of good quality and unrestricted quantity were provided free in the staff mess-room on each shift. (One evening I observed a burly young Irish hall-porter consuming large quantities of milk and eating specially prepared fish, and was told that it was the firm's practice to supply employees with a special diet, if this were justified on medical grounds.) Furthermore, by producing one clothing coupon, I could obtain a working shirt; aprons and " rubbers " were furnished without coupons ; all were supplied free. Laundry was also free : I could have clean working clothes every night if I wished. Free meals and free laundry added the equivalent of at least 30s. a week to my pay. The staff changing-room, which contained lockers for each man's outdoor clothes and personal valuables, was amply equipped with hot and cold shower-baths for those coming off duty.

It should also be recorded that this firm owns a fine workers' sports club in the country, for which a subscription of 3d. a week is deducted from the pay of active members, and 1d. a week from that of other employees. The club maintains a very comfortable branch establishment in the centre of London's West End ; this is fully licensed, and its considerable amenities include a billiards-room and a ball-room where dances are held several times each week.

So much for working conditions. Now for my associates. I was assigned to the pastry department, which employs by night a foreman, two other qualified bakers, and a porter. My duties were to clean and grease the baking trays, hand them in and out of the ovens, rack them, and, when cool, pack the appetising products of the night's labour—and these *were* appetising—and generally make myself useful to a team of finished craftsmen, all of whom are English.

Let me confess that, on presenting myself at 8.30 on the first evening at the door of the great kitchens four floors below ground, I awaited the immediate future without enthusiasm. I had often watched kitchen porters at their toil, and never without sympathy. To my surprise, I was greeted by my Christian name (my full name had previously been posted on the kitchen notice-board) and introduced by their Christian names to my new bosses. Immediately the atmosphere of that bakery took on a warmth which had nothing to do with the heat of its four immense ovens. In consequence, an industrious apprentice set about strange tasks with unexpected zest ; and let it be noted that he always received a helping hand when needed from his superiors, without once asking for it.

We worked in a subterranean land of plenty, remote from the upper-world of parsimonious household economy. Here were sugar, sultanas, raisins, margarine, lard—yes, and sometimes even butter—measured by hundredweights and tons. Huge 50-gallon bins groaned with their burdens of victoria plums and prunes in heavy syrup. In the well-guarded store-room there was a veritable Giant's Causeway of fine chocolate in 16 lb. slabs. And as we worked—believe it or not, Mr. Banfield—much of the time we sang. That is the reason for the title of this article. Our repertoire included almost anything you like to name . . . except lyrics composed by the Waters of Babylon.

Charlie, the foreman, turned out to be a thoughtful, good-humoured fellow, deeply interested in world events and their causes. He has been 17 years with the firm, following in the footsteps of his father, who is still in its service. Ernie, who was on loan from another department, counts 27 years in the same employment. He is a crack bowls player, speaks good French, and is said never to have been heard to swear. Jack, the youngest, is an adventurous type, romantically inclined. Part of his life has been spent at sea, and five years of it in New York. But nine years ago he gave up roving and came to anchor with the firm. All are first-rate company ; all can do unbelievable things with dough—even in war-time ; and all are well satisfied with their particular corner of the baking industry.

At " dinner " in the early hours of the morning, we often fell to discussing the Catering Wages Bill. Waiters, hall-porters, cleaners and others of this hotel staff of 1,350 frequently joined in our conversations. Many had seen long service with the firm ; many had worked for other catering concerns, both large and small, and these often had ugly tales to tell. The firm employs 25,000 people : not one of those I spoke with had ever heard of a single instance of victimisation or blackmail by the management. All agreed that the firm was the best employer in the trade, and the management not only reasonable, but invariably considerate—especially in cases of hardship or ill-health. (Its pay envelopes often bear a message inviting the staff to discuss personal and other problems with the management.) But all were agreed on this point also : that the Catering Wages Bill is an essential measure, and long overdue.

It remains to be said that I am no longer employed by the firm in question. These notes simply record what I have seen and heard. One word more. Charlie, Ernie and Jack—these are their real names—have read this article and given me permission to publish it.

" SARATAR "

RETURN

It was a pretty sight when, after the ban on the transportation of flowers, the flower-sellers were able to do business in the London streets again. A host of golden daffodils in the wild state never filled Wordsworth's heart with more pleasure than London women and girls felt on seeing garden daffodils for sale again at ordinary prices in the Strand. As I watched old women and young women approach the well-stocked stalls and walk off along the pavement with bunches of sunshine in their hands, I thought to myself: "How charming this would be if it were a scene one read about in a description of life in ancient Athens! How the inhabitants of that fair city would seem to us to express an incomparable love of beauty in such devotion to flowers! Especially in the crisis of a great war. We should have thought of those lovely maidens of Athens as performers in an almost religious ritual as they carried their flowers through the streets and turned a city into a moving garden." Whether the ancient Greek had a keener aesthetic sense than the modern Londoner I do not know; but we always give him credit for this. The ugliness—at least, the commonplaceness—of most of London is so obvious that it is difficult to believe that the sense of beauty is one of the chief characteristics of its inhabitants. Yet I doubt whether any people has ever been more passionately devoted to flowers. Flowers have to Londoners become one of the necessaries of life—perhaps all the more necessary because of the appearance of their homes.

It is strange that man should build himself hideous cities and hasten into them from the country as an escape from emptiness; and yet retain his longing for things so much more easily to be had in the country than in the town, such as birds and flowers. Even the bird-cage in the slum tenement is evidence that a slum-dweller may still be a country-dweller at heart: The window boxes and the suburban gardens show, too, a love of growing things competing with the taste for bricks and mortar. Most of all do the flower-shop and the street-stalls prove the discontent of the city-dweller with the city. Even the rich would hardly live amid barren streets if they could not import the country for a few shillings into their homes. Make London flowerless, and a millionaire would see in it a certain resemblance to Hell. Fortunately, up till now, there has never been a city quite cut off from Nature. The rural still mingles with the urban, so that you will see trees growing even in the vilest avenues of the East End.

The daffodil in particular makes London every Spring a part of the countryside. Set in a vase, it announces that winter has departed from the fields and that the swallow is on its way. Many people dislike yellow—the colour of jaundice—but I have never known anyone who disliked the yellow of the daffodil. To some the yellow crocus seems commonplace in comparison with the purple, and to others the yellow calceolaria is an abomination; but the yellow daffodil is a universal symbol of the return of golden days. The golden days may turn out to be murky days, but they are golden at least in prospect, and the daffodil is an astrologer that assures us—for the moment at least—that all will be well.

It is a curious fact that nearly all the returning things in the procession of the year fill us with hope. Probably, man could not have gone on existing if he had not been an incurable optimist; it is certainly true that he persists in associating all the novelties of the year—many of which are as old as the hills—with good news. The first snowdrop, the first daffodil, the first primrose, even the first dog's mercury, gives him pleasure as evidence that everything is about to happen as usual all over again. And he forgets that "as usual" has often meant misery in the past; he is convinced that this year at least "as usual" is going to mean something pretty good. Ask a number of men whether they would live their lives over again if they had the chance; and about half of them will probably answer "No." Yet every Spring they feel as happy as wrens, living their lives over again—the old flowers, the old birds, the old trees, the old all the rest of it. The cricketing enthusiast is rejuvenated as by an elixir as he hears the smack of the first ball on the first bat on the village green. We owe much of our happiness to our nostalgias.

Perhaps it is because nothing in nature lasts long enough that, never being sated with it, we are so eager for its return. The almond fades almost as soon as it has blossomed—though this year it seems to have flowered longer than usual—the moon waxes for a night or two only to wane before we have grown accustomed to its silver; the nightingale sings and in a week or two is silent till another summer. There are none of these things that we should not like to last longer; but Nature, like Covent Garden, gives no encores. Hence we wait as it were for another season's performances, when the things we enjoyed so much will return—hyacinths and jonquils, daisies and buttercups, blackbirds and thrushes. In this we are like the child who wants the story "over and over and over again." "Again," says the child after hearing a song or a nursery rhyme it likes. And most of us say to life—in some of its aspects—"Again."

Even as we read Milton mourning over his blindness, especially on the ground that he will no longer be able to see the return of the seasons, his lines give us pleasure, not only through sharpening our sympathy with his tragedy, but by bringing before us a picture of the beauty of the returning year:

> Thus with the Year
> Seasons return, but not to me returns
> Day, or the sweet approach of Ev'n or Morn,
> Or sight of vernal bloom, or Summer's Rose,
> Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine.

There we have the supreme poetry of nostalgia—nostalgia such as we have all felt, even if it has only been like Ortheris's for "the sights and smells of London."

Oddly enough, it is mostly for things outside us that we feel this nostalgia: I feel it myself for Portrush when it was half its present size and nigger minstrels performed on the grass above the Salmon Rock. Had those nigger minstrels performed under a roof in town, I doubt whether I would have gone to hear them even if admission had been free. But in the open air their songs—"Linger Longer, Lucy," "Two Little Girls in Blue" and the rest of them—became part of the surrounding loveliness—blue sky, blue sea, a pink strand and white rocks in the distance, seagulls, and all the charm of summer in the costumes of the human young. I feel the same nostalgia for the gallery of the Theatre Royal with its orange-sellers and the eager faces of young drama-lovers for whom no play was too long and no actor undeserving of a hand-clap. But such things do not return like the flowers of Spring. They change out of recognition and the Portrush we once knew is as irrecoverable as Atlantis. Even when we revisit our old school we—at least some of us—find it changed, so far as we are concerned, for the worse. No doubt it is improved, and a new generation will make of it a place of happiness such as we ourselves once knew. But we should not like to go back to it in its new condition. Those very shortcomings—which it has now lost—to us were dear.

Perhaps it is because the past cannot be brought back as the flowers of the season can that many people declare that they have no wish to live their lives over again. They know that the wish would be useless, and resign themselves to the terms on which life has been given to them. They may be nostalgic in their memories—but they realise that outside their memories nostalgia is a vain thing.

Hence they comfort themselves with the reflection that all is for the best, and that they are much happier than they would be if by a miracle they were restored to childhood, picking wild strawberries on their grandfather's farm or kicking a football about the school yard. I wonder, however, whether there is not an element of "sour grapes" in this resignation.

Certainly, wherever good things can return in our lives, we want them to return. Our quickened feelings in the Spring are a proof of this. Oak-leaf and ash-leaf, willow-wren and black-cap, apple-blossom and lilac—these things we want to come back, not different, but as we have always known them. So I thought—so, indeed, I knew—the other day as I watched the procession of women buying daffodils in the Strand. Y.Y.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Quest," at the New Theatre

In *The Quest* the Sadlers Wells Ballet has brought off a rare, a positively gala, conjunction of talents, Mr. Ashton for the choreography, Mr. Walton for the music, Mr. Piper for the decor. And what is more, these three highly individual artists have managed to keep very well in step. A fourth artist is, however, also implicated, Edmund Spenser, and his collaboration has not been quite so effective. His plot is rather confusing in the *Comedy of Errors* style, and we look vainly for the voluptuous, indolent, midsummer beauty proper to *The Faerie Queene*. But richness there is: the ballet brims with invention. Mr. Ashton has spilled lavishly the ideas that have been accumulating during his two years in the R.A.F.; the variety and dramatic expressiveness of his choreography are astonishing. It is impossible to judge Mr. Walton's music from a single performance, but certainly it is a *tour de force*. Brilliant and buoyant, it supports the dancers like galleons on its bold, glittering, varicoloured, Mediterranean waves. Mr. Piper in the *Palace of Pride* scene has evidently sought to emulate the sugary sumptuousness of an Elizabethan banquet, but the delightful set does not consort altogether happily with the even more delightful costumes. (Perhaps the lighting is not yet quite right.) Mr. Piper is a 20th century painter looking at the 16th through the eyes of the 18th, and while the sophisticated effect is full of wit and charm, this 18th century flavour corresponds to nothing in the music or the choreography. His first set is entirely successful, and the fifth scene is masterly. Here indeed the ballet, alike in choreography, music, backcloth and costumes, emerges into a tranquil assurance that makes it the most memorable achievement of the Sadlers Wells. The company, headed by Miss Fonteyn, Miss Beryl Grey and Mr. Helpmann, gave a highly polished performance, as did the orchestra under Mr. Lambert.

Artists Aid to China Exhibition at Hertford House

This contains over 700 exhibits, and most of our good painters have had the generosity to contribute. Lucien Pissarro and Ivon Hitchens have sent specially fine examples of their art, but whatever your fancy you are likely to find a work here by your favourite painter. A room is devoted to abstract and surrealist works. An assembly of Chinese artifacts provides a pleasing contrast to the inevitably obstreperous effect made by the individualism of modern Europe. Korean bowls of the 11th century, a temple-bell and a girdle-hook in bronze, a cream long-necked Ming vase, are among a number of objects that blessedly express the extreme refinement of an ancient and continuing civilisation. Since there is something in the exhibition for all tastes, it deserves to succeed in its purpose of despatching a large sum in token of our sympathy with the people of China.

William Nicholson and Eve Kirk at the Leicester Galleries

Most of Sir William Nicholson's paintings in this show are fairly recent, and the latest are the most masterly. Always an artist distinguished for accomplishment and taste, he now expresses an ever more refined sensibility with an increased freedom of brushwork. *Posy*, *Red Roses*, *Red Cinerarias*, and *Mimosa* can hardly be praised too much for their delicacy and, within the limits chosen, for their completeness. Other particularly charming works are *Fishing Nets*, *Ciboure*, *Premières Manifestations du printemps* and *Alcazar Gardens*. The last of these, like several of the other pictures, is grossly handicapped by a coloured frame. The fashion for such frames degrades pictures into mere drawing-room ornaments, and it is odd that so thoughtful a colourist should allow his recondite harmonies to be thus disturbed.

The best of Miss Eve Kirk's new paintings shows the old port at Marseilles. Her palette corresponds to the light of the Mediterranean, and still more of the Adriatic, so that her views of London charm chiefly as Italianate fantasies. Elegant and even subtle, they do not gain from being shown *en masse.* Her metamorphosis of the Thames into the Grand Canal is in danger of seeming a mannerism. Probably Miss Kirk's war-work is preventing her from cultivating her gift as intensively as it deserves.

THE MOVIES

" Commandos Strike at Dawn," at Gaumont and Marble Arch

" No Time for Love," at the Plaza

America has a long way to catch up in war films. *Commandos Strike at Dawn* is a better film than our own version of the underground battle in Norway; but that was years ago. Paul Muni as a Norwegian who escapes to England and acts as guide to a Commando raid on an important Nazi airfield, the national anthem sung by school children, courageous and suffering patriots, bestial Nazis, the raid itself rousing audiences to squeals of delight as a knife descends or a rifle-butt thuds on flesh, Sir Cedric Hardwicke as the English admiral in charge: all the ingredients of the thriller in a good cause are there. Exciting, authentic enough in its detail, all right so far as it goes; but we have learnt to expect more. There is an out-of-date romanticism in these thrills rising to an occasional hush. The gap between *Commandos Strike at Dawn* and *Nine Men* or *Fires Were Started* remains immense, and no American film yet has made the attempt to cross over.

Miss Colbert is in *No Time for Love*, and that gives charm to a story that would otherwise be very ordinary. She is a magazine photographer who prefers still life and camera angles (not very convincingly) to human beings, until a special assignment brings her face to face with life and a hairy ape. Fred MacMurray, working in a tunnel which she goes to photograph, is the hairy ape, and more likeable than usual. Of course, they click; in the movies, class barriers serve chiefly as an incitement to lovers. He sits on the best chair in her bedroom and it breaks; they marry at the end, and then presumably all the other bedroom furniture breaks, too. *No Time for Love* is the sort of film its title suggests, but livelier and a good deal funnier than most of its kind. The detail of tunnelling under a river, which might have been made fascinating, is rather a bore. William Whitebait

Correspondence

ETHICS WITHOUT REVELATION

Sir,—We of the younger generation who have been " taught by people like yourself " and not by people like the Rector of Dartington should not be the principal concern either of you or of him. That we have freely chosen to submit to this education and to lead our lives according to its precepts shows that our minds are already where you want them, and that our hearts are (unconsciously, of course) wherever the Rector thinks they ought to be. All right, we have been saved; we are doing the right thing, and shall go on doing it, right up to the barricades, right into the concentration camp. And just because our conduct is based not on faith but on fact, not on emotion but on reason, we shall probably prove ourselves all the stronger and better able to tackle the more difficult tasks beyond barricade and concentration camp. We may even be obliged to leave the Rector and his pupils behind at some point—the " prey " of some " specious philosopher."

No, even if sometimes some of us do wish we had something nice and simple and consoling, like Christianity, to fall back upon, you needn't worry about us. We chose this harder, surer road, and we shall not weaken now. But we are so few, and that is the real problem. What of the countless thousands of our generation who have never read Shaw or Wells, who have never heard of the " N.S. & N.", and whose only acquaintance with Christianity has been through the sacrilegious farce of weekly " Church parade "? They do not shun the Church to follow Kingsley Martin; nor do they ignore the " N.S. & N." because they are good Christians. They know nothing of either gospel. They do not argue, because they are not aware of any problem, and it is they who, in their ignorance and under post-war pressure, will fall prey not only to " specious philosophers " but to any sufficiently loud and moneyed demagogue who cares to raise his voice. It is to them, and not to us, that the Editor and the Rector should devote their combined attention.

The advantages of this alliance would be by no means one-sided, for, if the " N.S. & N." brought to Christians a clearer understanding of their duties in social and political affairs, the Christians could contribute a very salutary touch of emotion, of the crusading spirit, which is so sadly lacking among Socialists to-day. Christianity has, indeed, many " useful and poetic ways " of stating many truths, and, although we have scorned such short cuts, we might in the urgency of the present times have recourse to some of them without harm to our cause. We were short-headed before this war, which we so lamentably failed to prevent; we shall be no better off after it.

Finally, I think the Rector should know that we, who have seen Christians so often and so obviously wrong, can reasonably believe that you, sir, are so often right, not because of your unwitting Christian inheritance, but precisely because you broke away from it. " Airman "

Sir,—The Rector of Dartington in his letter suggested that you were the inheritor of a view of life that has come to you through Christianity, and, with all respect, I do not think that in your reply you have succeeded in controverting him by stating that you might have acquired much the same attitude from a study of Confucius. I think it is safe to say that such is not the origin of your beliefs, and it is quite certain that the bulk of those who are with you " on the right side " do not draw their inspiration from this source. The Apology of Plato and the writings of the Stoics, too, influential no doubt among scholars, could have had only a minor and indirect influence on public opinion on such matters in this country at the present day. As for the notions of right and wrong having been " discovered by man through many æons of experience," discoveries, whether material, moral or spiritual, have been made in all ages by a few outstanding personalities and transmitted by them to the rest of humanity, and the vehicles through which we Europeans have received those higher notions has surely been mainly, if not exclusively, the teachings of Christianity. You rightly repudiate the suggestion that the rector is urging you to preach what you do not regard as true, which is clearly contradicted by the whole tenor of his letter, which merely asks you to give consideration to his argument that we in this generation are living on our religious capital, and that when this is expended it is difficult to see what donation for right conduct will remain. Has any great civilisation endured when its religious foundation became undermined? You are probably right in saying that you will not restore righteousness to-day by persuading people to believe in the Summa Theologica, but a twentieth-century synthesis founded on Wells and Shaw seems to me unlikely to achieve any better success. Your school-teacher of the future may inculcate the highest morality, but one comes back to the rector's questions—*Why* be compassionate to the weak? *Why* love your neighbour as yourself? I doubt if the child will be persuaded by talks about Evolution and the Life Force.

Edward Whitley

Sir,—It is surely quite untrue that a person who is familiar with Marx and Darwin and Frazer and Freud cannot accept the theology of orthodox Christianity. To be familiar with the works of an authority does not necessarily involve acceptance of all his conclusions. Nor should it be assumed that the theology of orthodox Christianity is necessarily the same as what you have described as the ideas of mediæval Christianity.

The Christian asserts that Christianity is true. He also accepts as true all scientifically established facts. So far from his being conscious of any dilemma, he considers that, if Christianity is true, the established facts (including the established fact of the existence of Christianity as a religion) make sense and fit into a rational scheme, and that if Christianity is not true they don't. No scientific discovery has, in fact, affected to the slightest degree the claim of Christianity to be true, nor is it conceivable that any future discovery can do so.

The Rector of Dartington has, of course, gone right down to the basic question, and he has not been answered. No Christian supposes that the Christian code of ethics is a Christian monopoly. What the Christian says is that, on the highest authority, he believes it to be the right code. He would naturally expect to find that the best human experience through the ages would lead to very much the same results. But what no one except the Christian can show with any conviction is why *the individual* should conform to any code but that of his own private self-interest. It is no answer to talk of biological necessity or " social utility " or the interests of the community or the race. Why, in the last resort, should you or I bother about society, the community or the race, so long as we are comfortable? The non-Christian may agree with the Christian that it would be much nicer for everybody if everybody lived unselfishly. But this merely begs the question. To live unselfishly is to sacrifice one's own self-interest for the sake of others—if one does it for one's own convenience it ceases to be unselfish. And the question remains: why should not each individual seek to secure the maximum comfort and convenience for himself in what is at best an uncomfortable world?

It is precisely the consciousness that a man's self-interest includes the interests of his neighbours that has led worthy and well-meaning people into the trap of totalitarianism in its various forms. For, if you love your neighbour for the sake of your own comfort and his, the temptation to regimentation becomes overwhelming, and in the end tyranny inevitably results. Liberty can flourish only when a man's love of his neighbour is based upon, and conditioned by, the consideration that both are equally the children and subjects of God. C. J. Jeffries

6 Perth Road,
Beckenham, Kent.

Sir,—If I understand Mr. Edwards' " Open Letter," he implies that moral beliefs not based on theological beliefs are silly. This is preposterous. As the Rev. Richard Price pointed out more than two centuries ago, if we did not already know that lying is wrong, we should have no ground for even supposing that what we may take to be God's word is true.

University College, Oxford. E. F. Carritt

DEMOCRACY AND BROADCASTING

Sir,—Mr. Granville says " only two Back Benchers (and one a Governor of the B.B.C. !) besides the Minister were reported or mentioned " in a recent nine o'clock news Parliamentary report. This may leave the impression on your readers, not I am sure intended by Mr. Granville, that our Parliamentary reports are biased in favour of our own Governors. The debate was on War Pensions. Misunderstanding would have been avoided had Mr. Granville found room to mention that the B.B.C. Governor actually opened the debate and is a recognised expert on the subject. It is hard in the circumstances to imagine a summary, however brief, of this debate that did not quote Sir Ian Fraser.

Parliamentary reports reducing hours of debate to minutes of broadcast time can always be accused, and sometimes convicted, of sins of omission or commission, but no Governor of the B.B.C. has ever canvassed for publicity in these reports for his own, or for his friends', speeches. Nor has the Minister of Information. A very few M.P.s, Mr. Granville among them, do from time to time ring us up before nine o'clock for fear we might otherwise miss the merits of the speeches they have just delivered in the House.

A. P. Ryan
Controller (News).

B.B.C., W.1.

REGULATION 18B

Sir,—Speaking extempore in the House of Commons recently on Regulation 18B and Sir Barry Domvile's intercepted letter to the *Times*, I said that I had not the substantiating documents with me. One such cument is the *Anglo-German Review* for December, 38. In this issue appears an article by Sir Barry mvile advocating proceedings for criminal libel ainst those newspapers which dared to publish atter distasteful to Hitler. The article contains these ords : "The penalties are heavy. Let them be voked. Better a few editors in prison and a few inting presses idle than a world at war."

The author of such words cannot properly, it seems me, set up a great outcry on being deprived now of eedom tó publish his views. In supporting Home Secretary on this matter I do not, course, desire any limitation of the freedom of itors. On the contrary, I was at pains at the end the debate to elicit from the Parliamentary Secretary the specific admission that editors were free to ublish material from detainees which might reach em by devious routes.

Nor (may I add?) am I actuated by "intolerance" "vindictiveness," of which I have been accused. do not desire unnecessary hardship for 18B detainees any other human being. I have taken up privately ith the Home Secretary the cases of several who emed to be suffering undue distress, and I shall intercede on their behalf again whenever I am moved to so, whatever their political views. Moreover, if were practicable, I should welcome the provision f psychological treatment, on lines which have proved ccessful in the Soviet detention settlements, to assist hese maladjusted unfortunates towards becoming seful members of our future society.

House of Commons. **Thomas Driberg**

SHIPOWNERS AND AIR TRANSPORT

Sir,—In your issue of April 3rd you refer to the uture of air transport as a problem already "sufficiently embroiled." Why then embroil it further by isrepresenting the policy of British shipowners as "demand to control the air lines after the war"? Not a single passage in our recently issued memorandum even so much as suggests it. Since the repeal f the Navigation Laws 90 years ago, British shipping ompanies have developed in an atmosphere of vigorous competitive realism and they are, by tradition, wholly opposed to monopoly whether of sea or air ervices.

Moreover, in the national interest they argue that, ad sea transport been a national monopoly, Great Britain would never have possessed quite the vast and ariegated marine which twice in twenty-five years as proved only just sufficient to forestall defeat. In ommercial aviation they argue equally that monopoly will prove inadequate, that "a far wider and more aried deployment of experience, resources and individual enterprise" is required and they claim with mple reason that in those circumstances "British hipowners should be able to make certainly not an xclusive but a substantial contribution to the sum otal of British air commerce."

R. H. Thornton,
Chairman, Aviation Committee.
General Council of British Shipping,

[The report *Air and Sea Transport* disclaims monopoly for the air-services. But it claims "operation of air services by established sea-lines," and "overseas air services under the familiar house flags" in an organisation which "may well call for the pooling of resources by sea-lines.". This would seem to amount to a demand to control overseas aviation, leaving only short land-routes to other agencies. We regret that we failed to mention the exceptions.—Ed. *N. S. & N.*]

CHILD ALLOWANCES

Sir,—Your recent analysis of the Beveridge Plan is most interesting and helpful, and I should like to add a note on one feature of the Government proposals of which I have had personal opportunity to form an opinion. It would be helpful to know what others who are acquainted with working-class families really think about it.

This is the question of increasing children's allowances in kind instead of making an adequate cash payment. You speak of the desirability of these allowances in kind as not being in dispute. I venture to suggest that there are definite advantages in giving mothers the option of feeding children at home or at school. School meals certainly are a most valuable provision for the health of the children, and for the majority of cases they are the best use of the money. There are no doubt a certain number of families in which the mother might use the money less wisely. I should like, however, to draw attention to the number of cases in which a child is obliged to have meals at home through illness or for various reasons can be better and more conveniently fed at home. Where the child is delicate and has frequently to be kept home from school on account of colds and minor illnesses, it is a very grave drawback to have a portion of the allowance restricted to the provision of free meals at school. There are also cases in which the mother finds that the child prefers dinner at home and eats better there. Observation of the family and knowledge of the circumstances have often covinced me that she is right. There is always the incentive to the mother to let the child have dinner at school in order to save unnecessary cooking at home, if otherwise a substantial mid-day meal is not convenient. It is true the mother may sometimes be mistaken as to which is better for the child, but on the whole it is far better for the responsibility to rest with her, provided that she has a sufficient allowance to pay for the school dinner if this is better.

Another point in favour of freedom of choice by the mother is that there is more incentive to the manager of the school canteen to provide appetising and satisfactory food. I have only experience of a limited number of schools and they may be exceptionally good canteens, but I am glad to say that the only reason given for the children not attending has been either lack of money to pay for it or the reasons I have given above for special cases. Invariably the mother has said that the school dinners were good and she had no complaint to make about them. I think that if the school dinners were all given free as part of the family allowance, so that the majority of mothers were compelled to choose them, whether they suited the child or not, there would be less incentive to keep up the standard.

Ashtree House, **Dr. Hilda Clark**
Horton Kirby, Kent.

ARMY EDUCATION

Sir,—A good deal of lip-service is paid to Army education in the national press, and the undersigned feel that the public should have some of the facts of what often happens at "educational" meetings. The meeting from which the following details are taken is fairly typical of those we have attended.

The lecture purporting to be on India took place in the evening and attendance was supposed to be voluntary. Nevertheless men had to be detailed to attend in order to ensure that the military officer had a "full house." The address which followed was noticeable both for its inaccuracies and for its bias.

No attempt was made to put forward the view of any of the Indian Groups, Hindu or Moslem, or such liberal views as those of Sir Tej Sapru or Mr. Rajagopalachari, and no mention was made of Dominion Status. The only view presented was that of the British Army and of British Imperialism.

We leave you to judge the accuracy of the following statements :—

1. Gandhi is the self-appointed dictator of Congress.
2. The only demand for Indian Home Rule comes from a small group of Indian "professional" men and would-be intellectuals.
3. Gandhi is the mouthpiece of the money-lending class in India.
4. Only 65 per cent. of Indians are now illiterate (and this was said despite the fact that "Empire : a Monthly Record," May, 1940, gives the figures as 86 per cent. males and 98 per cent. females illiterate).

In addition to the patently misleading statements given above the whole address was accompanied by cheap sneers at Gandhi and his fast while no attempt was made to place the present struggle in its historic setting.

Many of those who came to the meeting with empty minds on India left with a one-sided view of the difficulties there. When the soldiers in this country are dragooned into a political meeting and there conditioned at the authority's whim we are left in no doubt as to their future sympathies should they ever be called on to suppress "national" or independent feeling in India or elsewhere. We append our names, but for obvious reasons ask you to respect the address as secret and to allow us to sign ourselves.

Five Members of H.M. Forces

BAKERS' WAGES

Sir,—Your correspondent "Saratar" states that "there is a minimum rate in the lowest experienced grade of £3 2s. per week, plus 14s. war bonus, plus 10 per cent. for night work." This rate only applies in the highest paid areas, i.e., Lancashire, Cheshire, and recently London has been brought up to this rate from 60s. It is possible, however, for skilled workers of the same grade to be paid 51s. per week (1s. 0¾d. per hour) in certain rural areas. For night work additional payment the 14s. war bonus is not taken into account, and the 10 per cent. is paid only on basic rate.

The rate in this area is 1s. 1½d. per hour, but I should like to point out that many are receiving more than the minimum rates owing to acute labour shortage. The firm by whom I am employed are paying 3½d. per hour above the minimum.

R. M. Brierley,
President, Home Counties District
Operative Bakers, Confectioners, and
Allied Workers,
Berkhamsted.

"TECHNICOLOR"

Sir,—Our attention has just been drawn to the criticism of the film *The Moon and Sixpence*, appearing in your issue of February 6th. The words "in hideous technicolor" are part of this criticism, and we write to inform you that the technicolor process was not used for the colour sequence in question, and perhaps you will be good enough to make a correction to this effect in your next issue.

Naturally, we do not and cannot object to any criticism which you may make of technicolor productions, even should they actually be "hideous" to your critic, but we feel sure you will now wish to withdraw the comment in so far as *The Moon and Sixpence* is concerned. **Technicolor Limited.**

Harmondsworth, **Kay Harrison,**
West Drayton. *Managing Director.*

COUNTRY SCHOOLS

Sir,—Mr. Duncan Smith has drawn attention to the possibilities of country houses as boarding-schools. He is thinking of the post-war years. It may perhaps be of interest to record that even during the war it has been possible, on a small scale, to experiment along the lines he mentions, with results that leave little doubt of the value of this line of approach in education.

The sudden onslaught of the 1940 Blitz on the East End of London made it urgently necessary for the official evacuation schemes to be supplemented. After only a short search, a rambling shooting lodge in the beautiful countryside of central Wales was found. Here there were not even the amenities of most country mansions, but in full measure the "beautiful and healthy surroundings" of which, as Mr. Smith points out, "children in their impressionable years have a particular need." This building now is occupied by some thirty Bethnal Green children who are receiving the full education which is the result of a combination of trained teaching and a happy country family atmosphere.

So successful has this experiment been, and so long the waiting-list of children to go down there, that a year ago a seventeenth-century farmhouse in the same valley was opened as another school. In January of this year yet a third was started in a large country mansion in the same part of Montgomeryshire.

In the case of the first two there was no room capable of holding more than twelve children at a time ; the sanitary arrangements have had to be supplemented ; but even keeping well within the present wartime buildings restrictions, it has been possible to eliminate nearly all the physical difficulties save only that of finding staff and funds to cope with the ever-increasing demands.

Starting from an evacuation hostel it has been possible, in the last two years, to establish three residential schools for children of the type least likely in normal circumstances to enjoy the advantages of boarding-school. The change in physical and mental health has been sufficiently marked to convince us that the experiment must be continued, extended and followed up. **Guy Clutton-Brock**

BOOKS IN GENERAL

In the first of his Clark Lectures,* which were given wholly to the work of Thomas Hardy as a novelist, Lord David Cecil beckons us back politely but quite firmly to the true path of criticism. It is, he says, a middle path. It lies within an author's work not outside it on some æsthetic eminence; nor beneath it in some undermining sap where the psychologist works with his drill, where the sociologist taps around with his hammer or the political and religious critics test foundations with their professional spirit levels. And by the middle path Lord David Cecil does not mean the cautious choice of moderate views. He means that the critic will move, appreciative and vigilant, on a course that never strays beyond the limits of the scene and never loses sight of the writer's personal vision on the one hand nor of the form which he delights to give it on the other. The "personal critics" who do not accept the sole authority of their subject's book are especially rebuked, for they openly take up positions outside of the works they criticise:

> A race of critics has arisen who judge a book by how far it expresses what they conceive to be the mind of its period. They rebuke Charles Lamb for writing in what they call a non-contemporary language. They complain that Mrs. Woolf's novels fail to comment on the significance of modern social changes. They also have forgotten the books. We do not read these authors for their moral virtues or social significance. Many worthless writers would do equally well for that purpose.

I am not very happy about this paragraph. To an appeal for a return to the book one must respond with alacrity, for in criticism there is no keener pleasure than the one we get from the comely illumination of an unflurried, unforgetful and educated taste. But I confess that *Gulliver's Travels*, for example, was a richer book to me when I considered its relation to the beginnings of modern science—one was not likely to underrate the chapters on Laputa which so many distinguished critics have done—and I think that Edmund Wilson's recent essay on Dickens or Mr. Van Wyck Brooks' work on the New England writers and Mark Twain disposes of the suggestion that "the worthless writers" will do for a criticism that is curious about the relation of literature and life. Criticism can be at its best only about the best. The weakness of this kind of criticism is, of course, that it cannot tell us whether a book is good or bad; we cannot tell whether we would wish to live in a house merely by examining its foundations. Yet after the nineteenth century there has come a time when one of those periodical visits to the cellars and foundations has become necessary—a sterile time for the arts when their relation to life is very much in question. Such a criticism is, perhaps, addressed to other writers rather than to readers; it is meant to create writers. If it is addressed to readers as well, I do not think that Lord David Cecil is on safe ground in thinking that the high pleasure of literature is not to be sought at all in the moral virtues or social significance of the authors he mentions. I recall that one of the pleasures of reading *Mrs. Dalloway* was in the shock, like the spray of a scattering wave, of being assailed by a mind whose evident moral reference was very different from my own. And how many of us, intoxicated by romantic literature in our impressionable years, and too inexperienced in taste to allot it a proper proportion in our minds, have found it bamboozling our vision so that we were trying to see with the eyes of one period and live with the eyes of another. Some of us can't help being taught.

The novels of Thomas Hardy especially had this double power to intoxicate both the imagination and the susceptibility to belief. We could believe in the President of the Immortals. These novels rang upon the chords of the mind like spring thunder, and the uncouth latinity of their prose drove the iron deeper into the soul, as no doubt their author intended. Many quite bad writers have, of course, the power to intoxicate; but Hardy had the power not merely to get into the head, he could get into your boots. You were forced into the narrow, wrangling path of his Wessex journeys, looking for crabbed Fate at the stiles and seeing the face of Chance, vacuous over the horizon. A second reading was not, as Lord David Cecil says, so potent; there were reservations and also discoveries. I cannot too strongly urge the reader of Hardy to start again under Lord David Cecil's guidance. He has superlative powers of appreciation and definition. He is precise and discriminating, and readers of his earlier work on the Victorian novelists will find a minimum of theory and a great deal of that rare faculty of easy, orderly and careful illumination of the subject which is worth everything in literary criticism. His intellect is gracious and spirited, his writing is courteous and his judgment is housed in an educated moral tradition which puts one in a glow of acquiescence. I do not know how far his rebuke of personal criticism is to be carried, but it seems to me that he comes very close to exactly that kind of criticism in the brilliant climax of his book. I refer to those pages which make the comparison between Hardy and the Elizabethan dramatists.

All the arguments of the book have been marching towards this conclusion, and it is one which the Victorians themselves felt to be true of many of their writers. The words Elizabethan and Shakespearean were often on their lips, and Browning (whom Hardy so greatly admired) especially felt this Elizabethan backing. To ourselves the comparison, if we make it, means something very different. For a romantic diffuseness, a strong will and sense of power do not seem to us especially Elizabethan. Before we apply that epithet to Hardy's work we see at any rate what Lord David Cecil means when he describes the novels as poetic dramas. The narrowness and intensity of Hardy's range suit his work to this description. And so do the poetic conception of character and the visual sense of scene. Moments like the murder in *Tess*, when the blood makes its heart-shaped stain on the ceiling, or the hallucination of Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, when he sees his effigy in the river, are clapped on like act following act in the theatre. The simplification of issues connives at the same end, for it is always one issue: man at odds with an indifferent environment. The characters of Hardy's novels enter on the roads and commons of their own villages with the startling air of strangers, and when they leave us, we see them like dwindling travellers silhouetted for one brief, disheartening moment against the distant skyline, leaving behind them the empty amphitheatres of the Downs. They have the burning transience of the intensely conceived. Only Synge, who comes openly from the Elizabethan dramatists, conveys this dramatic sense of a Nature and, indeed, of a world, denuding itself of people. This is Hardy, but it might be the Synge of *Riders to the Sea*:

> "Well, poor soul; she's helpless to hinder that or anything now," answered Mother Cuxsom. "And all her shining keys will be took from her and her cupboards opened; and little things 'a didn't wish seen anybody will see; and her wishes and ways will all be as nothing."

But let Lord David Cecil make his point in his own words:

> Hardy was a man born after his time—the last lonely representative of an ancient race, strayed by some accident of Destiny into the alien world of the later nineteenth century. His circumstances were peculiar. The society in which he was brought up was that in which the ancient mode of life lingered longest. . . . He was the typical child of such a society—simple, unselfconscious, passionate, instinctively turning for his imaginative nourishment to the fundamental drama and comedy of human life, responsive to the basic joys and sorrows of mankind, to the love of home, to the beauty of spring and sunshine, the charm of innocence; to fun and conviviality and the grandeur of heroism; to the horror of death and the terrors of superstition. His talent was of a piece with the rest of him—naive and epic, massive and careless, quaint and majestic, ignorant of the niceties of craft, delighting shamelessly in a sensational tale, but able to rise to the boldest flights of imagination. So far from being the first of the modern school of novelists, Hardy is the last representative of the tradition and spirit of the Elizabethan drama.

Yet how that spirit changed under his hands. The brazen noon gives place to an iron twilight. The new mechanistic science had made man into "an empheral fragment of matter":

> Hardy's characters may be the Elizabethan characters; but how different they look when we realise that the fierce passions animating them are ineffectual to influence their destiny, that their ideal beliefs and fantasies fleet but for a moment across a background of nothingness. A profound irony shadows Hardy's figures. Though we enter with heartfelt sympathy into their hopes and joys and fears and agonies, yet always we are aware that soon they will be gone forever and that behind them stands the indifferent universe, working out its inscrutable purpose, careless whether they live or die. It is still the Elizabethan world, but the Elizabethan world with the lights going down; and gathering round it is the dusk that heralds its final oblivion.

There is a loss of vitality and pride. There is a loss of the Elizabethan glory.

We can see now how crushing Darwinism must have been to those who thought of human beings as isolated souls. Townsmen and suburbans like Zola the socialist, or like Meredith with his gallant Teutonic supermen and women, were not crushed; but scientific rationalism was not made for the dying pastoral world; its natural habitat was the cities. Like Synge, Hardy lamented the passing of a culture; and as Lord David Cecil points out, for all his unbelief there was an outraged nostalgia for certain values which Christians especially respect. Our difficulty in reading Hardy comes from the fact that, as it has turned out, the consequences of Darwinism for us have not been the kind of drama Hardy saw enacted. That science is in our blood, it has built and is still building our world; even though it destroys, we believe that we can ultimately control it. That the universe is hostile is the view of primitive men; it does not seem hostile to mass society. The friendliness of nature has returned; man, not the "It," that "neither knows not nor cares," monstrously fills the stage.

Poetic dramatists have been common in the English novel which, in any case, because of Fielding, was marked by the influence of the theatre. Lord David Cecil's judgment seems to be that Hardy was made for this extremely artificial form which has stiffened the English novel in habits which the Russian and the French novels have been free of. The opening chapters of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* have, as he says, the dramatic placing and continuity of a film, plotting its way from coincidence to coincidence; and Hardy makes us accept the convention in which unexampled Chance and fantastically convenient eavesdroppings pile up their drama, without any serious difficulty. Very soon our protests die down, for we are assisting, as Lord David Cecil acutely shows, not at the drama of this man or that woman. We are watching the drama of love, man, woman, of the earth. These impersonal epics are made tolerable, intimate and human to us by the particularity of scene and rural custom, so that the fairs, the farmers' dinners, the trades, the rustic hearsay, facilitate what otherwise would be distant from us. In one book, smaller in scale than the rest, but flawless as none of his other work was, Hardy created a purely lyrical world: *Under the Greenwood Tree* is a poem by Herrick, and with that slightly rough edge to it, a nettle sting in the sun, which saves it from being pure conceit. Fancy's white lie on the last page is refreshing. One dreads to think of the supernal calamities it would have led to in any of the later novels, and one is delighted to meet a Hardy who has not yet grown old enough to project female inscrutability upon the empty canvas of Destiny. The strange thing is that in his poems, if we set the ballads apart, Hardy has no Elizabethan air at all. At least I would not call it so. I wish they had come within the scope of Lord David Cecil's remarkable study.

V. S. Pritchett

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* *Hardy the Novelist.* By Lord David Cecil. Constable. 7*s.* 6*d.*

AN AMERICAN SERMON

Time for Greatness. By HERBERT AGAR.
Eyre and Spottiswoode. 7s. 6d.

Not long ago a well-known Englishman of tters, who is an agnostic, was talking to an equally stinguished Roman Catholic propagandist. Why," said the agnostic, "do you never try convert *me*?" "Because," said the Roman atholic, "it would be useless. You would think wrong to use your will in coming to a conclusion bout truth." I was reminded of this conversaon by many passages in Herbert Agar's book. e would very much like not to have grown out f an orthodox faith, but he cannot help being a umanist who can only find mental comfort a faith that is approved by his reason. The sult is a powerful lay sermon directed primily to the American, but, incidentally, to the ritish people. There are many eloquent pasges; more that are witty and epigrammatic. he book is the more effective because it is obviusly the outcome of conflict.

The driving faith of the United States, and deed of all Western civilisation, is the search for berty, equality and fraternity. If our civilisaon breaks down (which Mr. Agar thinks quite kely) it will be in his view because we have run way from the honest effort to apply to the wentieth century the phrases that meant so much the founders of the American Republic and European democracy. Hitler has had his chance smash democracy because we have been such ad democrats. If, while we talk of liberty and quality, the population is hungry in the midst of lenty, Hitler or his imitators will have their way. r. Agar does not run away from the implicaons of this thesis; he is outspoken about the egro question in America, and if he says little bout the less pleasant sides of the British Empire, hat is the result of political tact. He insists on a rogramme of social improvement while at the me time urging that materialist remedies are adequate. He is at his best in an amusing analysis f the "advertising" outlook. To shout to uzzled and unhappy people that the matter with heir marriages, for instance, is that the wife asn't bought the right scent or studied the right ncyclopaedia, is typical enough of the basic istake of a commercial civilisation. "The loss f faith," says Mr. Agar, "cannot be cured simply y improvement in the standard of living. 150 ears of a rising standard of living left millions f citizens in our Western World in a mood of espair, and a defeatism which made possible the ise of an Axis attack on life." He demands a oral revolution applied to social affairs, but he s much too knowledgeable a moralist to think that reaching alone will do the trick. His chapter on he class-war is mainly a sermon addressed to roperty-owners.

Mr. Agar's actual proposals about society spring from three axioms. He starts with Acton's amiliar aphorism: "Power corrupts and absolute ower corrupts absolutely"; his second is that "What is everyone's business is no one's business"; and the third he takes not from Marx, but from *The Federalist*: "Power over a man's support is power over his will." It follows from these that the government we want must be constitutional in the sense that authority is limited; that the institutions must be familiar enough and small enough for the average man for him to feel that they are really his business, and that since real power is economic power, no institution, not even the State itself, must be in a position to dictate the means by which we get our living. Mr. Agar is therefore opposed to any "over-all plan," believing that whether it is socialistic or fascist, it destroys individual liberty and removes those constitutional safeguards which are more necessary than ever in the modern State. Mr. Agar has too keen a sense of political realities directly to attack the Soviet Union, but in more than one passage he shows his fear and dislike of Soviet methods. Mr. Agar has not, it seems to me, done enough thinking on this point; he is highly emotional about the U.S.S.R. It is quite true that civil liberty has to be won in Russia just as it has to be won after every revolution. Fear of the capitalist world, the necessity of making Russia independent of the foreigner, and of diverting the colossal energy released by the revolution to the purpose of war—these have increasingly weakened in the Soviet Union revolutionary institutions which were in their origin libertarian. But the response in the war suggests a higher degree of popular "participation" than that discovered so far in America, or even in Britain. It is an easy mistake for the Westerner to confuse the absence of political liberty to oppose or even criticise the regime with that more intimate liberty which in the early days of the Soviet Union was one of its outstanding characteristics. "Electricity plus Soviets," Lenin said "make Socialism." It is certain that electricity has been more developed than Soviets since the beginning of the first Five Year Plan. But I should not assume, as I think Mr. Agar does, that, given a reasonable period of freedom from the fear of outside intervention, the nominally remarkably free constitution of 1935 would not become a reality.

Mr. Agar's own remedy is broadly speaking that of Henry Wallace. The mixture of private initiative with State enterprise in the T.V.A. commands his admiration. He sees, as every unprejudiced person must to-day, the necessity for national ownership of the great monopolies and of the basic means of production. But he is essentially Jeffersonian in his outlook and, returning always to the fact that those who dictate a man's means of support exercise the real power, he seeks for ways in which the individual man may have personal rights against the impersonal force of the State bureaucracy. Interesting though Mr. Agar's suggestions often are, they are not what the reader will most readily carry away from this book. The book will be judged by its power as a sermon, which urges us, in phrases that are passionate as well as brilliant, to use this time the "second chance" that we threw away after the last war.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

THE ATHENS OF ARISTOPHANES

The People of Aristophanes: A Sociology of Old Attic Comedy. By VICTOR EHRENBERG.
Blackwell. 25s.

The structure of Athenian society in its greatest days, its way of life and its economic habits, demand the attention of any classical scholar. Nor have they been neglected. Such matters as population, trade, manufactures, class distinctions, and slavery have all received attention. In the main, works of this kind have suffered from two defects. First, the absence of statistical evidence had produced many unconvincing theories, and classical scholars who embark on economic theories are liable to make many unproved assumptions. Secondly, the analysis of Athenian economics apart from Athenian life, is, at least for humanists, a forbidding subject. Dr. Ehrenberg's brilliant book surmounts both these defects. He bases his sociology on Old Attic Comedy and especially on Aristophanes. Starting from this, he is able to give a detailed account of Athenian life, which is both fully documented and in touch with life.

The method is new and demands great qualities. The author must know his original sources perfectly, be able to interpret them correctly and above all to distinguish between fact and fancy. For Attic Comedy moves in a world of its own where topical and realistic jokes mingle with grotesque exaggeration and pure fancy. Dr. Ehrenberg keeps his head and his judgment. He knows a joke when he sees it and knows how much it is worth as a statement of fact. He does not write for a wide public, and, despite its admirable clarity, his book is not altogether easy going; for he quotes his authorities in the text and is not afraid to discuss their worth. But for those who are ready to make the effort, it is extraordinarily rewarding. It is a pleasure to watch his masterly marshalling of the copious and difficult evidence, to see him picking his way through highly controversial subjects, and to appreciate his use of small fragments from lost plays to complete his picture. His knowledge ranges far beyond Aristophanes, and he seems to have missed no evidence of importance. He is particularly successful in dealing with fragments of lost comedies, whose worth is extremely hard to assess. Often next to nothing is known of the plays from which they come, and their allusions and references are sometimes lost beyond recovery. But when brought by Dr. Ehrenberg into touch with the living world of Aristophanes, they often take on a new significance and help to establish some interesting point.

Dr. Ehrenberg discusses almost everything that we wish to know in the structure of Athenian society. After a survey of the evidence and its worth, he gives as complete a picture as he can of the farmers, the upper classes, traders, craftsmen, foreigners and slaves who made up the population of Athens. The results are extremely interesting. For those who have a romantic view of Athens as an ideal democracy, it is important to realise that even in the later fifth century there was an upper class which fought for special privileges, maintained its position in politics, had its own way of life, and was the subject of many excellent jokes. His account of slavery is no less instructive. Athens was a slave-owning State, and most households had at least one slave. On no matter are ancient jokes more informative, and from these Dr. Ehrenberg shows how unenviable on the whole a slave's lot was, what an insuperable division there was between him and the poorest of free men, how glad he was to take any opportunity of escape. He shows the part played by slaves in prostitution, their racial variety and origins, their opportunities for making money, the kind of work that they did. He makes out a convincing case that, essential as slaves were to Athenian domestic life, economic life owed little to them except in the special case of mining.

The second part of the book advances to such topics as family life, money, religion, education, war and peace. On family life Dr. Ehrenberg gives a most convincing account. On the vexed question of the position of women, he steers a middle course and though he allows that married women had some small share of liberty, he shows that they never met men as equals and that the absence of jokes about learned ladies proved that they did not exist. He has much of interest to say about the simplicity of Athenian life, points out that the pig-sty was often indoors, though not, as has been claimed, next to the hearth, that food was on the whole extremely simple, and that by-streets were used as latrines. He also discusses the Athenian attitude to money and points out the enormous part it played in the average mind and how parsimonious the average householder was. He draws an interesting contrast between the Old and the New Education, as Aristophanes caricatures it, and shows how much truth there is in his burlesque. In the end emerges a picture of a people hard-living and hard-working, full of vitality and independence but at the same time devoted to certain traditional forms and rites and rigidly conservative in all that concerned the home.

Dr. Ehrenberg has written this book in circumstances which might well discourage any ordinary man. Forced to leave Prague, where he was a professor, in 1938, he has been an exile and a wanderer. The patience, the perseverance and the care which a work of scholarship requires are hard enough to maintain in comfort and security. For Dr. Ehrenberg they must have been difficult indeed. He is to be more than congratulated on a fine piece of work. He deserves a tribute of personal respect for completing so hard a task in circumstances so hostile. Nor should we forget his publisher, Mr. B. H. Blackwell, who in these impoverished times has produced a handsome book and illustrated it with excellent plates.

C. M. BOWRA

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AMERICAN HUMORISTS

Modern American Humour. An Anthology selected by MICHAEL BARSLEY. *Pilot Press.* 5*s.*

War conditions in publishing have brought the little anthology into its own. Instead of the "omnibus" of pre-war years containing everything from the world's religions to the 100 great detective stories, there is a preference for slimmer vehicles, for more discrimination. The best anthologies—not necessarily the most useful—contain a personal bias and are representative of the compiler's taste. The more critical that taste, of course, the better, but it is a question not of being impeccable but of being true to one's idiosyncrasies. Mr. Michael Barsley, for example, inclines to America, word-juggling, democratic wit and the disruption of society, and for him *Modern American Humour* means satire and the vernacular. Starting with Edward Streeter's *Love Letters from a Rookie to his Girl*, and ending with Damon Runyon, his selection covers the peace years of jazz, uplift and the gangster, and though some of the authors chosen are genial and even at home in their times, for most of them (this is the general impression) the bull-fight with Stupidity dominates everything. Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* (one chapter reprinted here) assaults the monstrosity of the average, and its flatness is after a while itself flat, though the incantations to modern machinery and mass living raise it a little. Ring Lardner's conversation between two business men meeting on a train and Frank Sullivan's Cliché Expert testifying on love give us unvarnished idiocy in its most acceptable form: in small doses. With Mencken (not here) the sport becomes a campaign—and a bore.

Other writers in *Modern American Humour* escape into autobiography and the grandeurs and miseries of family life. Clarence Day's *Life with Father* mixes sentiment and humour delectably. The incident chosen by Mr. Barsley is the failure of the ice-man during a heat-wave, and the behaviour of the Days (as magnificent on the distaff side as the Ambersons) is awe-inspiring as well as funny. Thurber—my own favourite in this line—has no old-fashioned figures to reverence or poke fun at; one night the bed fell on father, but it's the bed that overawes us; an aunt is always throwing boots down the corridor; brother Herman, who says "Awp" and believes that something will get him in the night, seems to be a manic-depressive. And Thurber himself? He shows symptoms of all the known psychoses. His great achievement is to have bridged the gap between loony-bin and family hearth, to have brought the case-history to life; that his revelations should also be funny (this is denied by some) is an extraordinary feat, accomplished largely by the lucidity of his prose. "The Night the Ghost Got In" will be fresh in the memory of Thurber fans. There was no ghost, but there were footsteps and Herman and granddad and the cops and the zither on which slept the guinea-pig. Robert Benchley, represented by a piece on the incompetences of French journalism, belongs to the same school of childhood terrors and social tics, though he is more guarded in his confessions.

Bemelmans (*Small Beer* and *The Hotel Splendide*) seems to me the most promising of recent humorists, except that he has an excessive love of chromium plate which is liable to distract him into smartness. Woolcott and Dorothy Parker seem to me overrated; but they have their followers.

The verse is rather disappointing. Not enough of it, and what there is—Don Marquis, Dorothy Parker, Ogden Nash, Phyllis McGinley—would compare poorly with a similar selection from English writers.

G. W. STONIER

REGENCY

Regency Roundabout. By DOROTHY MARGARET STUART. *Macmillan.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

If any encouragement for books about the Regency were needed, Hitler has provided it in the shape of a neat historical parallel. But the brilliance of society as well as of literature during this period, the way in which it modulates from the eighteenth century to the remote Victorian key, are enough to explain why the years from 1811–1820 have been so lovingly explored and charted. Miss Stuart, with praiseworthy austerity, has shut her ears to the sirens of politics and society, and avoided the great Byronic whirlpool, confining herself to humbler sources and less memorable circles. Her material, gathered from old newspapers and magazines, obscure books and family letters, was collected while she was writing her books on "The Daughters of George III" and "The Mother of Queen Victoria." These extracts, which deal chiefly with the years 1811–1814, are grouped according to their subject matter and bound together by her comments and explanations.

Some interesting points come to light, such as the "proprietary chapels." These were originally built by great families and corporations for their own use; they were independent of the parish and generally unconsecrated. But in time they became a kind of speculative investment. The pews were let at a profitable rent so long as the "lecturers" could provide sufficiently striking sermons, and beer and wine were often stored in the crypts. The lecturers, chosen for their preaching and not their piety, were paid about £30 a year, though this was sometimes augmented by an appreciative audience. And in spite of its title—Miss Stuart has a weakness for the inverted-comma use of Regency idiom—the chapter on the "Medical Gentleman" and the account of the rivalry between Dr. Andrew Bell and his disciple Joseph Lancaster, two of the pioneers in free elementary education, are enjoyable. But they would be more interesting if the subjects were treated with greater thoroughness and less anecdotage. The writer's talents lie in the direction of good plain cookery; her hors d'œuvres are not savoury or varied enough. There are too many obituaries and newspaper extracts, a dead weight of platitudinous writing under which the page sags, and far too many bad poems. Of this Miss Stuart is aware, but her defence that all her "fragments of minor verse" bear the form and pressure of the time will not hold. Ebenezer Elliot's lines to his wife:

> Bone-weary, many-childed, trouble-tried!
> Wife of my bosom, wedded to my soul!
> Mother of two that lived and nine that died!

are unexpected, and a few other quotations have a certain tenuous charm. But William Thomas Fitzgerald and George Dyer, Lamb's ingenuous friend (whom he persuaded that the Waverley Novels had been written by Lord Castlereagh) were not poets at all, however minor. Their verse, and that of their equals, is too opaque and "non-conducting" to convey anything but a glimmer of an age or literary fashion.

The whole book should deal less with what people wrote, and more with how they behaved. For instance, this description, written by an "old gentlewoman" in 1813, very successfully expresses the astonishment, almost the repugnance, felt by the older generation at the *dégringolade* in dress and manners.

> On lately entering a ballroom I beheld a group of little girls with bare heads and bosoms, gossamer gowns and Lilliputian fans. . . . The gentlemen seemed equally metamorphosed. I knew indeed that lace and embroidery were no longer seen; but I was not aware that the frocks and unpowdered heads which I saw in the morning would be deemed proper for an evening appearance. The belles, however, did not seem to regard this stile as unsuitable to their own, for they immediately began

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JONATHAN CAPE

promenade with their black-legged beaux. The entlemanly bow and the low curtsy are looked for n vain. . . . On leaving the ballroom some of the nen attend to their partners so far as to wrap their hawls and tippets around them, give them their rm as far as the head of the stairs, shake hands and ay "Goodnight. If I had my hat I would see you own."

Regency Roundabout is a scrapbook in which the ckground of commentary is usually more inter- ing than the scraps, which often are not worth ch careful cutting out and mounting. It leaves impression that the anonymous middle reaches society at this time led lives that were provincial almost drab. The roundabout revolves wly to a rather languid tune, and the sparkle ich is found in Jane Austen's letters as well as her novels is absent.

CRESSIDA RIDLEY

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

ALTON: *Belshazzar's Feast.* Huddersfield Choir, with Liverpool Philharmonic Orch., cond. William Walton (H.M.V. C3330–4).

HACHATURYAN: *Concerto for Violin.* David Oistrakh, with U.S.S.R. State Symphony Orch. (Decca K1082–6).

LAZOUNOV: *Stenka Razine.* Liverpool Philharmonic Orch., cond. by Constant Lambert (Columbia DX1107–8).

UPPÉ: *Beautiful Galatea — Overture.* Columbia Broadcasting Symphony Orch. (Columbia DX1110).

LOCH: *Abodah* (*God's Worship*). Ida Haendel, accomp. Adela Kotowska (Decca K1076).

ACH: *Second Sonata for Viola and Piano.* Watson Forbes and Denise Lassimonne (Decca K1043–5).

OZART: *Sonata in F* (*K.*376). Hephzibah and Yehudi Menuhin (H.M.V. DB3552–3).

ALE: *English Dance.* F. Grinke, accomp. Ivor Newton (Decca M530).

AX: *A Mountain Mood,* and *a Hill Tune.* Harriet Cohen. (Col. DX1109).

ISZT: *Rigoletto Paraphrase.* Alexis Kligerman (Decca M531).

IZET: *Micaela's Song* (*Carmen*) and MASCAGNI: *Mother, You Know the Story* (*Cavalleria Rusticana*). Joan Taylor with Orch. (Decca K1087).

AURÉ AND HAHN: *Ici-bas!* and *En Sourdine.* Maggie Teyte (H.M.V. DA1830).

AURÉ: *Nell,* and *Lydia.* Maggie Teyte (H.M.V. DA1831).

AURÉ: *Les Berceaux* and CHABRIER: *Villanelle des Petits Canards.* Sophie Wyss (Decca M529).

CHUBERT: *Impatience* and MENDELSSOHN: *On Wings of Song.* Webster Booth (H.M.V. B9315).

STANFORD: *The Fairy Lough* and *The Pibroch.* Roy Henderson (Decca M535).

If it was with the Viola Concerto that William Walton jumped, with both feet together, into the front row of British composers, it was two years later that, in *Belshazzar's Feast,* he gave us the first real display of that rhythmic pugnacity which is perhaps most deeply characteristic of him and which brought a new quality into English music. A truly magnificent recording (I must apologise to H.M.V. for having proclaimed such a thing to be impossible) comes to show that the years have not dimmed the glitter, the nervous vitality, and the athletic beauty of this amazing cantata. Not that it is perfect; the music is—like the Symphony—too continuously aggressive and misanthropic; the final section would thrill us more if our senses were not already stunned by so many climaxes, so many consecutive pages of *tutti fortissimo.* A quiet section after the "Praise Ye" sequence would have sufficed; and one could bear a good deal more solo singing than Walton allows us in this work. But with this reservation the cantata must be accounted a brilliant and durable success. I hope the recording will have the sale it deserves; even the most strident and confusing passages emerge with astonishing clarity. I could have wished for rather more orchestral bass during the heavier choral tuttis; but even this is a fault on the right side. Dennis Noble sings the solo with ease and fire.

How sensible it was of Walton not to attempt to infuse an Oriental atmosphere into the music of his cantata! Only Rimsky-Korsakoff (and then only at his best) can make the combination of Eastern modes with western romantic harmony sound anything but bogus. The "Jewish" music in Busoni's *Die Brautwahl* is the least convincing thing in that wonderful and fascinating opera; and even Bloch often sails too near the wind. I do not know why Khachaturyan's music is at present considered worthy of so much diffusion; to me it appears vulgar, academic and dull. The final dregs of *Coq d'Or* would in any case be unappetising; and I can find nothing else in a style as synthetic as Saint-Saëns's. To be sure, Khachaturyan's music always has a certain rhythmic vitality, and he is here well served by what sounds like a peculiarly fine violinist. I say "sounds like" because the recording is horribly shrill and the discs themselves have a bad surface. The concerto is very long and aggravated by a lavish, empty and (what is worse than either) entirely undramatic cadenza. I can see no excuse for this kind of music, replete as it is with apparatus for deceiving the half-educated into a belief that they are listening to something fine. And the same goes for *Stenka Razine,* which has, however, the merits of being short and relatively unpretentious. Constant Lambert achieves a performance which is lurid, effective—and cynical. Small blame to him! But since Russian music is the fashion, for Heaven's sake let us have *good* Russian music—there's plenty of it, in all conscience! Give us Tchaikowsky's *Second Piano Concerto* (for a change), and some more of his chamber music, and arias from the operas sung by Mme. Slobodskaya, and Rachmaninoff's *The Bells* (his finest work), Balakireff's Symphony and a re-recording of *Thamar,* and Shostakovitch No. 6. After that we'd see . . .

To bring my railing to an, alas always temporary, end, I wish to enter a protest against the recording of Suppé's *Beautiful Galatea.* This is a jolly, tuneful affair—typical bandstand music, in fact; but that is no reason why it should be made to sound like a circular saw.

Bloch's *Abodah* was not hitherto known to me. It is a smoky, highly charged rhapsody of the same order (though not, I think, of the same merit) as the composer's *Schelomo.* Of the performance there can be no doubt; it is wonderful. Miss Haendel may well end as a violinist of the front rank. Up to now her playing, though always brilliant and clear cut, has had the superficiality of youth. It seems to be deepening.

Readers of this column will perhaps remember my warm recommendation of the first of the *Three Sonatas for Viola* by Bach. The second is perhaps even more attractive and the performance equally good. This is a series to collect. Connoisseurs and others are likewise vehemently urged not to miss the Mozart *Violin Sonata in F.* This is equal, in mellow beauty, to any of the sonatas Mozart wrote for the instrument, and it is not among those contained in the Kraus-Goldberg albums. The performance is just about as good as it could be.

Benjamin Dale's *English Dance* is an agreeable thing, a little ornate perhaps, but very easy on the ear. The executants have seized this point and made the most of it.

I always feel that Sir Arnold Bax is at his best when obliged to rise to some grand occasion—a symphony, say. His smaller pieces bear all the marks of a fatal facility: they are vague, diffuse, rather empty. This is, I believe, true of these two tunes recorded by Harriet Cohen, whose careful and sensitive performance yet does not convince one that they are really worth while.

Liszt's *Rigoletto Paraphrase* can be delicious or merely "amusing," according as it is played with romantic conviction or just with a transcendent execution. I cannot recall a really satisfactory recording; this one is rather lifeless and wooden, the passagework too laboured to be taken (as it should be) for granted.

The vocal list is more promising. Miss Joan Taylor's operatic style is good enough by English standards,

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and her high notes are taken without a scoop—which is much. A whole essay could be written about the rôle of Micaela, but this disc does not give sufficient excuse for that. Miss Teyte sings Fauré with all her usual subtlety and beauty of phrasing; the songs themselves are enchanting: *Nell* in particular brought down the house when she sang it recently at the Wigmore Hall. *En Sourdine* might have been good Reynaldo Hahn, had he not unluckily been reminded, while writing it, of a certain popular valse of the day. These discs suffer only from a slight coarseness which one supposes due to wartime recording conditions.

Miss Wyss's record is especially recommended. The Chabrier song is enchanting.

Impatience and *On Wings of Song* make a good pair—on the killing-two-birds principle. The first is a wine that needs no bush, the second a sweetish but honest Moselle. I prefer Mr. Booth in the Mendelssohn.

The Stanford songs were well worth recording. They are not deeply original, but they have genuine poetry and the kind of workmanship one expects. Roy Henderson was the obvious choice to sing them, for his voice has the romantic warmth and flexibility such songs require. EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST.

Mr. Sackville West writes: "I wish to correct two mistakes, the first a misconception, the second a misprint, in my last week's article, *Recent Concerts.* In the paragraph on the Morley College Concert for 'Miette Muthesius' read 'Alison Turves.' In the reference to Bernard Stevens Piano Trio "the overpowering influence" of which I wrote should be that of Bloch, not Bush.

China After Five Years of War. Preface by Dr. Wellington Koo. *Gollancz* 6*s.*

No reader expects to find controversy, however relevant and fundamental in a Government publication. *China After Five Years of War* is no exception. But it is a highly competent document prepared under the auspices of the Ministry of Information of the Chinese Republic, and it has physical, strategic and economic maps which are necessary for a public trained to look at the Atlantic as the centre of world affairs. A chapter on the Chinese war, showing the significance of the main battles together with a chronology, gives us an opportunity of following events through five years when our newspapers gave little publicity to developments in the Far East with which we were supposed to be only slightly involved. The story is told of Chinese Reconstruction—the industrial changes, the transfer of industry, the growth of the Industrial Co-operatives and the new planning in rural economy. Facts about the Youth Movement, plans for the extension of education and the role of women in the new society which has grown out of the war prove, if any proof were needed, the adaptability and resilience of character, and the high powers of organisation which our Chinese Ally has shown during these years of trial and invasion.

Week-end Competitions

No. 688

Set by Saint-Loup

The Head of a school wishes, with good reason but inadequate evidence, to get rid of a pupil, and writes therefore to the father, a Bishop whose good will is important. No obvious excuse is valid. The usual prizes are offered for the most skilful letter of not more than 200 words.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, April 19th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 685

Set by Raymond Mortimer

The usual prizes to the amount of four guineas are offered for clerihews about architecture—competitors can express themselves about either styles or individual buildings.

Report by Raymond Mortimer

There is room, alas, for only about half of the entries well worth printing. Among those regretfully omitted is Frank Spooner's Guide to Gothic. Much the most popular subject is the Albert Hall, oddly, since this gargantuan pork-pie is not the most offensive building in London by a long chalk. Also oddly, about half the competitors rhyme "baroque" not with "cod but with "coke." I recommend that the first p of two guineas be divided between John Carter a —exquisite example of hereditary genius—Nico Bentley. Half a guinea each to C. S. Cook, Phi R. Cecil Owen and F. C. C.

Gilbert Scott
Might have been a lovesome thing, God wot,
If he had resisted the wiles
Of manufacturers of encaustic tiles.

Mendelssohn and Chermayeff
Cantilevered for dear life
In their endeavours to vie
With Gropius and Fry.

I do not like Pont Street Dutch
Much,
Preferring the more stuccoed behaviour
Of Belgravia. (JOHN CARTER)

My aversion is such
To the horrors of Pont Street Dutch
That I actually cheered for a bit
When St. Columba's was hit.

The great *châteaux* of old
Leave some people cold.
I, for one, would give Amboise
Une framboise.

The Cathedral of St. Sophia
Must have been terribly dear,
Though the cost could hardly compare
With the Odeon, Leicester Square.
(NICOLAS BENTLEY)

Shell-Mex
Used to vex;
But the New Library by Scott——
Mein Gott!

Things will have come to a pretty pass
When we live in aseptic houses of glass.
I own
I shall throw a stone. (C. S. COOK)

Said Sir Edwin: "Giles Scott
Doesn't know what's what.
My cathedral
Will be more polyhedral."

Our new country cottage
Has ample wattage,
And a parlour for the fastidious;
My word, it's hideous!

Quite by mistake a
Drawing by Sir Herbert Baker
Of a mould for jelly
Was used for New Delhi. (PHIZ)

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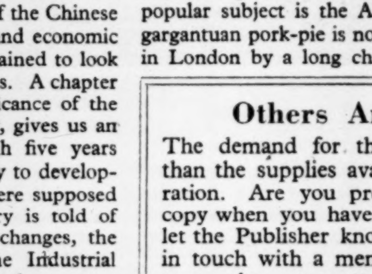

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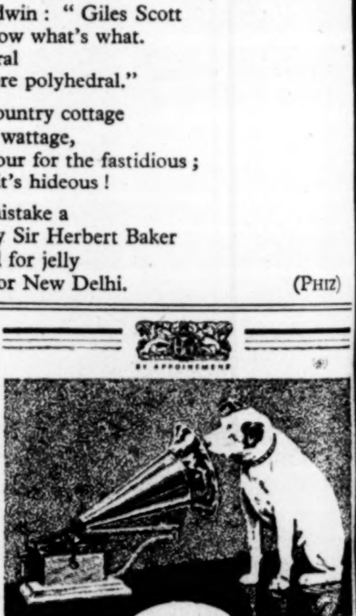

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INSTRUMENTS OF QUALITY

Why does the Brighton Pav.
Put one in mind of a gorgeous Lav. ?
Because it was meant
For Europe's first Gent.

The chapels of Wales
Look rather like jails,
Only they are roomier
And gloomier.

Westminster Abbey
Is looking old and shabby,
Whereas the Albert Hall
Seems scarcely to age at all. (R. Cecil Owen).

There are twenty-eight spikes to my certain
knowledge
On top of the chapel at King's College ;
It's curious how everybody likes
Those twenty-eight spikes.

We aren't private or anything like that
In our concrete flat.
We might be labelled for exhibition :
" Middle-brows, 1943. (In fair condition.) "
(F. C. C.)

The Brighton Pavilion
Is a joke to the million.
But to all friends of mine
It's a sort of a shrine. (Hardy Amies).

The Gothic showed little ability
To exemplify humility ;
Its whole tradition
Was arch-pride and vaulting ambition.

The sky-scraper, you bet, isn't
Architecturally " reticent " ;
It simply glories
In repeating tall stories. (Little Billee)

A thatched cot
Is not so hot ;
It looks quite becoming,
But its depths need plumbing.

Even a Nissen
May some day make the eye glisten
And the heart beat fast
Remembering things past. (Douglas Hawson).

The H. of C. and H. of L.
Looked very well
On a foggy night
If one was tight.

The chamis
Of Glamis
Owe something to hystery
And a monstrous mystery. (Marbrus).

The Church of St. Peter in Rome
Has a very large dome,
And you wouldn't call
That of London's St. Paul
Small.

The Albert Hall
Has no architectural beauty at all ;
I prefer Salisbury Spire ;
It's higher. (William Bliss).

Out of the sea, as though afloat,
The Town Hall rises. Dote, gloat
On it, you seamen coming to dock home
At Stockholm. (Willy Tadpole)

The Balliol Mind
Is notably refined ;
And this despite its suckling
By such an Ugly Duckling. (I. C. Saul).

Did anyone get a salary
For designing the National Gallery ?
Surely not, at any rate,
For designing the Tate ! (Freebody)

Blenheim Palace
(It is said without malice)
Was built for just two,
Like the igloo. (Richard Pomfret)

St. Paul's
Has birds about its walls ;
Wrens like a home
To have a dome. (Ladybird).

I like Norman naves,
One sits behind pillars and misbehaves :
You have to be so particular
In Perpendicular. (Ignotus).

The Duke of York's column
Is a trifle too solemn.
I want a teeny
Touch of Bernini. (Lewis Curtis).

The Vatican
Is built to a plan.
But the Kremlin
Was surely designed by a Gremlin.
(John Coutts).

Sir John Vanbrugh
Didn't design the Alhambra
Which is Moorish
And poorish. (Maud Budden).

Norman Shaw
Said : " The Quadrant's a bore,
And Nash's style wasn't just—
Like mine, robust." (Sir Robert Witt).

It's just as well
The Russell Hotel
Has an empty square in front
To bear the brunt. (Susanne Knowles).

Any façade
Is marred
By decoration—
A purely bourgeois recreation.
(Helen Grosvenor)

The Law Courts
Are often in my thoughts—
O, what an eyeful
Of Gothic revival ! (K. Bloomfield).

Mr. Smith built a thousand villas,
Some with porches and some with pillars ;
His brother James was hanged instead
Because he stabbed his wife in bed.
(Eric Aumonier).

The most futuristic art'll
Be powerless to startle
The nation
That conceived St. Pancras Station.
(Ronald Mason).

To imitate " Greek "
Needs considerable cheek ;
There are signs in " Auld Reekie "
That someone was cheeky.
(Gordon Simpson).

The *D——y Ex——s* place makes an impressive
Bid to be progressive ;
The *T——ph* near by
Doesn't even try. (Stanley J. Sharpless).

At Peter Jones
One mustn't cast stones ;
But Regent Street has had its fill
Of Portland Bill. (A. C. Manuel).

The Devil had a hand
When some buildings were planned ;
You might find the Manchester Midland Hotel
In hell. (V. B.)

The Crystal Palace's
Fallacies
Roused Ruskin's shrillest objections
To all such erections. (E. K.).

Poised over this proud people, steel flower of Hell,
As if to catch the sound of whispers in the cellars
Beneath this sad city, cité pleine de
Rêves, keep watch, O my noble tower, so strong and
slender ! (Charles Morgenstern).

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VICKERS LIMITED

The seventy-sixth Annual General Meeting of Vickers Limited was held on April 2nd at Vickers House, Westminster. Mr. A. A. Jamieson (the Chairman) presided.

In his statement, which was circulated to the Stockholders with the Report and Accounts, the Chairman said:

Vickers have sold certain quoted shares, and the remaining holdings under this heading now stand at a nominal figure. The market value of these holdings at 31st December was approximately £143,176. In the balance sheet of Vickers-Armstrongs under the sub-heading "Other Companies—Shares, at cost, less reserve" there is a reduction from £462,285 in 1941 to £238,647 in 1942. The reason for this is that Vickers-Armstrongs have taken over the assets and liabilities of three of their wholly owned subsidiary companies, viz.: The Whitehead Torpedo Co. Limited, The Thames Ammunition Works Limited, and The Variable Speed Gear Limited. The assets and liabilities taken over are now included in the Vickers-Armstrongs' balance sheet under the appropriate headings.

The increase of £15,883,601 in the figures of Stocks, Work-in-Progress and Debtors of Vickers-Armstrongs reflects the expanding production of that Company. The consequent drain upon our cash resources, after allowing for the increase in instalments on account of Contracts of £8,491,294, is exemplified by the reduction in cash balances and the larger advances which we have been called upon to make to Vickers-Armstrongs, the indebtedness of that Company amounting to £8,517,007 as against £6,395,155 in 1941.

The accounts indicate that 1942 was a year of expanding production and our energies were fully employed in producing all forms of material for the supply departments.

The Report and Accounts were unanimously adopted, and the Final Dividend of 6 per cent. approved.

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Points from the speech of the Chairman, Sir George Lewis Barstow, K.C.B., and from the 94th Directors' Report.

SECURITY FOR POLICYHOLDERS 94 per cent. of the Policyholders' Funds are invested in the United Kingdom and the Empire.

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APPROVED SOCIETIES The total amount expended on benefits exceeded **£5,500,000.**